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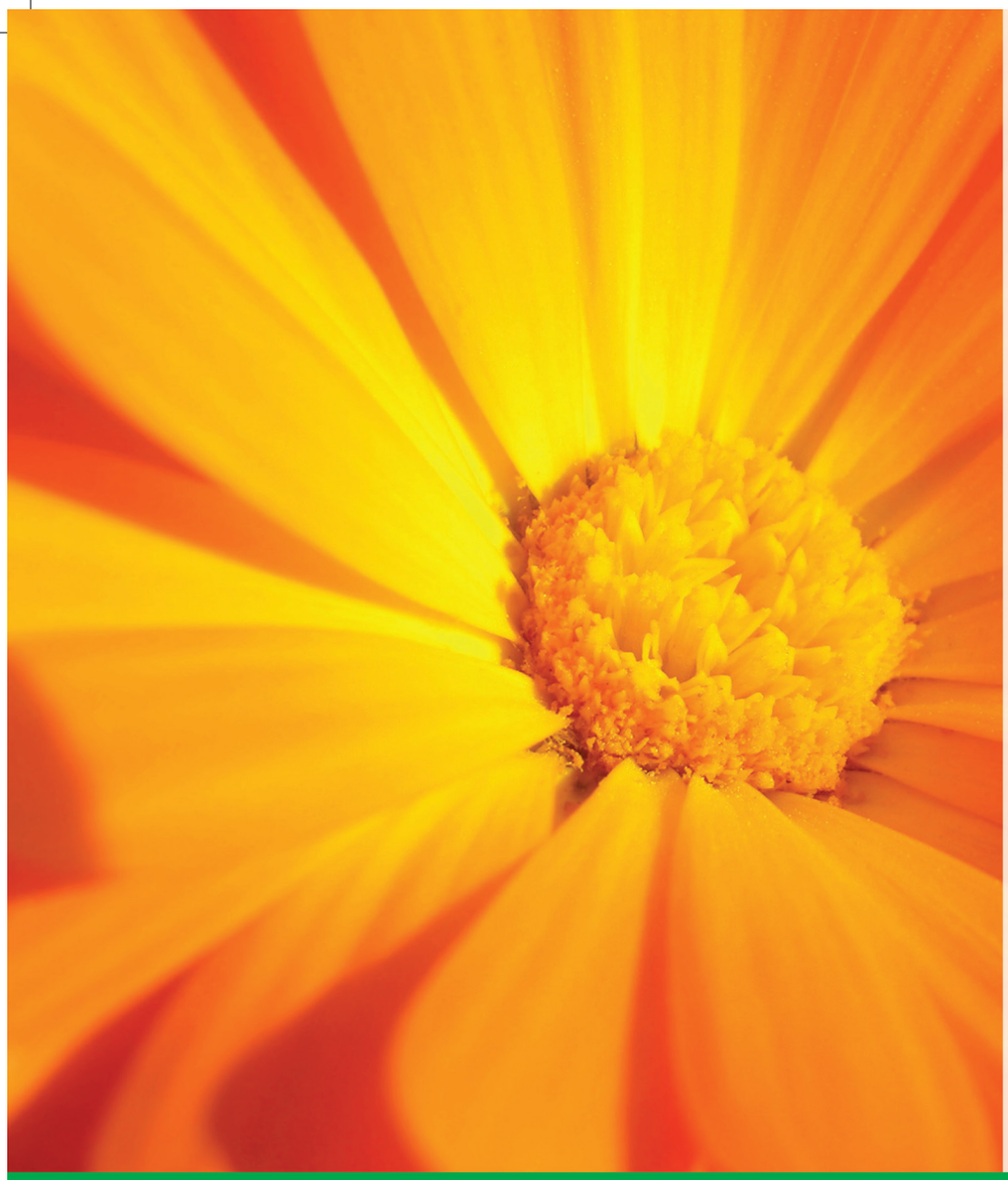
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FEBRUARY 6-19, 2014

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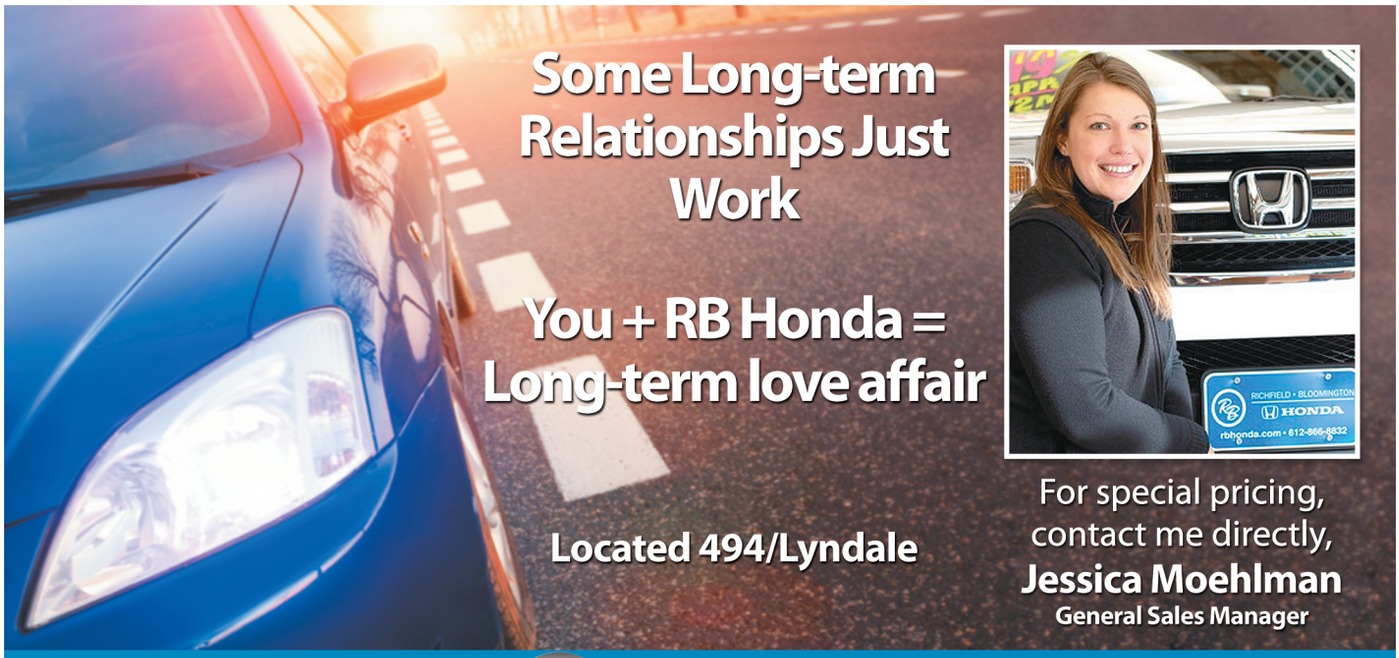
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ON THE COVER
A dignified kitty at Bone Adventure.
Photo by Hubert Bonnet









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FROM THE EDITOR | BY ANDY LIEN

Redesigns & Fitness

So, how do we look? We've had a little work done. A little nip here, a tuck there...a new font here, some streamlined pages there. As promised, with our new programming and partnerships also came a little redesign. We took a little weight off the tops of the pages and put the contributors at the front while taking some weight off some fonts and adding strength in boldness here and there. How apropos for our first Fitness Quarterly.

Fitness. One of my least favorite "F" words. Some "F" words are fun and naughty to say, this one just makes me cringe. My story is not uncommon. Another "F" word is Fat. I started big, stayed big, and am big. I've tried not to be, many times, and will continue to try not to be. As you know, Yoda tells us: "Do. Or do not. There is no 'try.'" I know. I just haven't done it, yet. That "do" part is what gets me. He also says, "You must unlearn what you have learned." That's the bigger part of this challenge of "doing."

I'm not going to say I'm not happy with myself. I mostly am. Except for that being overweight thing that I've thought about every single day since the second grade when I was first told that I was too heavy. Every single day. People, ads, media, clothing...so many messages telling me how I should or shouldn't be. Because of this perspective, I won't be the one on a soapbox telling anyone else how they should look or feel about themselves. It's personal. But, because our persons are so obvious to others (and not easy to hide), the topic of bodies and fitness is often a public one.

The real bummer of it is, if fitness were based on something I like or had a natural inclination for, I'd be ridiculously fit. If fitness depended on whether or not I can sing the alto part to almost any song, given plenty of practice, I'd be a poster child for it. Or, if going on a really long road trip and having stamina for driving were the way to build muscle, I'd be ripped. Or, if going on month-long diets with 110% gusto multiple times a year could get me there, I'd be there.

But, fitness takes work. Fitness is uncomfortable. It can be klutzy and I have to learn how to do it to be safe. It is similar to things I like to do, like reading music and being good at singing and singing with other people–feeling teamwork and camaraderie–which could make it easy to continue doing on a regular basis. But it is not something I like to do, yet, and probably won't be until I turn fitness into something that I like, that I'm good at, that I can do with other people and feel camaraderie. This will take some of that unlearning that Yoda mentioned. I have to unlearn my aversion to it and learn how to like it. I need to really understand how it will make me feel better, how it will even make me feel good.

And I've started this project of learning "Fitness." Last year, I made the choice to start working with a personal trainer. It was a stressful time and I was trying to figure out how to work through the stress–by talk therapy or something else. Out of nowhere came the idea that I could probably work through the stress by working out. What? Me? The person who laughs at my friends' sports injuries because "that doesn't happen in choir" might actually do something athletic? I did and I don't regret a lick of it. When I could've been at home noshing on whatever carb I could find as I pored through current events, I was instead at the gym...learning how to do Romanian deadlifts and use the workout machines. I was crunching numbers of reps and sets instead of chips. With each new exercise I learned, I also learned to have more self-respect for my body. I used to think that big bodies weren't capable of being active without the real threat of incapacitating injury. It just ain't so, and my trusted personal trainer helped me learn my body's limits and warning signs...as well as its growing pains. What a freeing experience it's been.

What people say about feeling better about ourselves when we work out turned out to be true for me. Sounds like a cliche–a trap!–but I felt semi-euphoric after working out. My steps felt lighter when I got off the elliptical (I think it was a physics trick or something). But, not just physically, my mental state improved. When I looked around and saw other people working out, I didn't dwell as much on whether or not they were judging me, but I noticed that they were sweating, too. They had turned bright red like I did. They had to wipe their workout off the machine with the antibacterial spray and papertowels just like everyone else. Working out is messy. I get messy working out. But I am not a mess. I may be big, but I am strong. And I am getting stronger. And, to get back to our "F" words, that's a BFD.

It's up to you to decide if you want your own redesign. Is there something "wrong" when we want to revamp how we look? Not necessarily. It's up to each of us to decide if and when and what constitutes an improvement in our lives. For me, I understand that food and fitness are two areas in which I would like to improve...I need to redesign my habits and behaviors to redesign myself. My content will be much the same, like this magazine, but I'll look (and feel) a bit better. And I'll be a whole lot stronger, too.



With sweat and thanks,

Andy

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A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Are We Doomed To Repeat?

Having just finished Joel Greenberg's *A Feathered River Across the Sky: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction* (see Books, page 55), I happened upon an article about the ecological impact of large predator loss.

The California mountain lion, noted Science, influences even river courses and butterflies. By consuming mule and Columbian black-tailed deer, they preserve forest vegetation from unsustainable foraging. As a consequence, sufficient larval food plants remain for butterfly populations to prosper.

Large numbers of thirsty deer also decimate vegetation whose roots prevent riverbank erosion, while their trampling hooves weaken denuded ground risking overflow and flooding.

The self-serving reasoning that human hunters can take the carnivores' place ignores the fact that restricted hunting seasons and limited access cannot replace carnivores' day-in, day-out full terrain predation. But killing large carnivores isn't the whole problem. Anything big, rare and braggable is at risk.

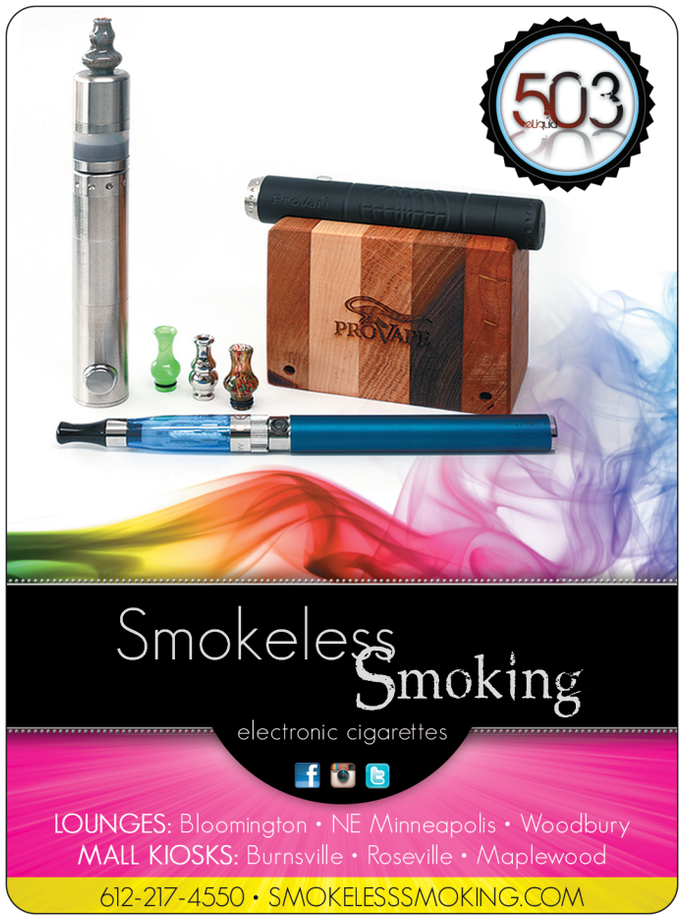
Hunter Corey Knowlton, for $350,000, recently won the Dallas Safari Club's auction to hunt an African black rhino, travelling to Namibia for what he calls a "conservation hunt." The theory is that his money will go to help the deceased's 5,000 remaining kin.

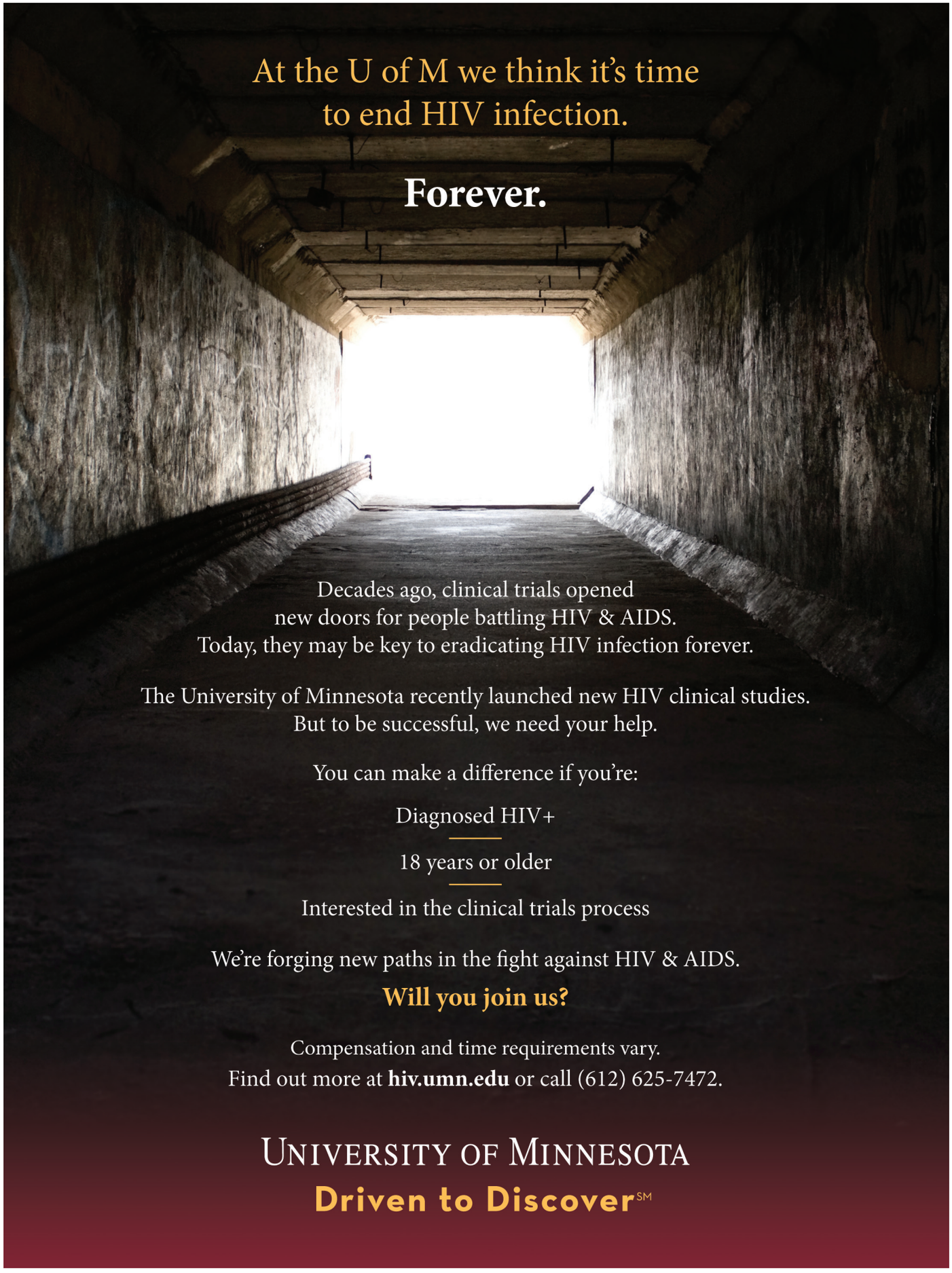
Might that money be better applied toward promoting eco-tourism so that many visitors might experience live animals in the wild? Does the license permit killing animals of breeding age? The black rhino requires a 16-month gestation and calves stay by their mothers two to four years. Unmolested, they can live 35-40 relatively peaceful years. Presumably Knowlton has not paid nearly half a million dollars to bag the most elderly and decrepit specimen.

As Joel Greenberg demonstrated in his book on the extinction of the passenger pigeon, a bird that numbered in the billions, man can take creatures in any numbers and reduce them to zero. Will one more rhino make any difference? And what will be the rationale of the next hunter who feels it is his right to render a unique animal dead?

Unwilling to accept that man had eradicated the passenger pigeon, wild theories were proposed including their having packed up and flown to Australia. The black rhino can neither fly nor swim. We know where they are and what's being done for and to them. As Pogo Possum said: "We have met the enemy and he is us." ■






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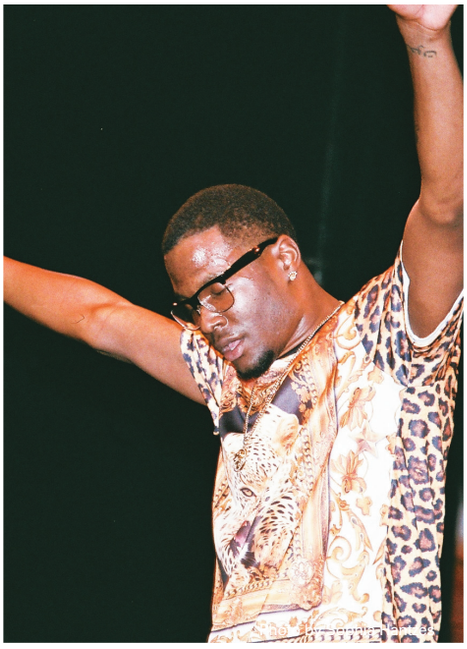
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"BEAR" WITH ME (WHILE I TELL YOU ABOUT)... | BY BARRY LEAVITT

2014 MR. TWIN CITIES LEATHER WEEKEND

Friday, February 14 – Sunday, February 16
The Saloon • 830 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis
It's time to dress in your leather best and head over to the Saloon for the 2014 Mr. Twin Cities Leather Weekend. Luke Wallrich, Karri Plowman, and the whole gang at Twin Cities Leather & Latte have another great event planned, including:

Friday February 14
8:00pm Meet and Greet
9:30pm Contestant Introductions/Drawing for Contestant Order
9:45pm Raffle Drawing
10:00pm Black & Red Ball

Saturday February 15
2:00 – 5:00pm Kink U
8:00pm Contest
10:00pm Victory Ball

Sunday February 16
12:00 – 4:30pm Brunch/Hands on Rope Class
4:30 – 8:00pm Beer Bust/Travel Fund Fundraiser
10:00pm – 2:00am Rubber/Kink Shower Contest
Search "2014 Mr. Twin Cities Leather Weekend!" on Facebook for more information.

SHOW PONY STARRING LESLIE JORDAN

Thursday, February 27 – Sunday, March 2
The Cabaret at Camp Bar • 490 N. Robert St., St. Paul
Get ready once again Minnesota! He's baaack! Leslie Jordan returns to the Twin Cities with his very own special "night at the races," one man show. As one of American pop culture's most recognizable, enduring (and endearing) personalities, the diminutive dynamo rides back into town.

Galloping back Camp Bar with his latest on-stage, autobiographical romp, "Show Pony", Leslie Jordan, the delightful, Deep South Dandy saddles up for an evening of horse feathers hilarity! "Show Pony" is Jordan's reflections on the never ending, relentless quest for sustainability and longevity in "La-La Land"; still having to pay your dues, life on the road and what it takes to truly stay relevant and in the race. In true thoroughbred form, he remains characteristically frank, charming, self-effacing and wicked!

An admitted, inveterate name dropper, any Jordan show is peppered with those star encounters that seem to only happen to him as he continues to have projects literally fall into his lap that surround him with the biggest names in show business. From being banged on the conker with a frying pan by Betty White (Boston Legal) to trying to convince his director friend at the helm of the Oscar winning megahit, The Help that he'd be just as feasible in the Emma Stone lead role as the now mega star was to being surrounded by an orgiastic collection of screen legends (Jessica Lange, Angela Bassett, Kathy Bates) where getting his eyeballs carved out by a melon baller (American Horror Story) triggered his natural instinct to cajole for more scene-stealing screen time, Jordan as always simply can't and doesn't hold back! General Admission: $34.50, VIP Reserved Table Seating: $39.50. Visit www.camp-bar.net/showpony for tickets and more information. ■



Mr. Twin Cities Leather 2013, Kyle Truss.
Photo by www.everettallenphotography.com.

SPORTS | BY NELL GELHAUS | PHOTOS BY SOPHIA HANTZES

Playing For The Other Team, Volume II

"Follow your blocks! You have to follow her and read her backside! Make the correct cut!" In a small gym at the Minneapolis American Indian Center, Coach Heather Baker tosses a football to the next woman in line. "All right, you're up. Let's go!" Lisa Bastien cradles the ball tightly under her right arm and takes off.

Wait, back up… what? Women? Are they playing football? Indeed they are, and have been for quite awhile. You can, too, ladies. I did.

Women's tackle football has quietly been around for well over fifteen years. Since I've made it my mission to shed light on worthwhile teams to play for in the Lavender community, there was no better place for me to begin than with the team from which I recently retired, the Minnesota Machine.

Why retired, you ask? Well, it may have something to do with a certain fiancée informing me that if I played throughout wedding planning, there might not be a wedding to plan. Or not, I don't know.

Anyway, four years ago, a recent Minneapolis transplant, I discovered the Machine, and being a football fanatic, joined, in the hopes it would give me a chance to meet people – or girls. Sure enough, there were other lesbians, because, um… football, but there was also camaraderie, and beer buddies, and a chance to compete in a sport I'd been denied my entire life.

I should point out that this league is not the LFL, or Lingerie Football League, ahem, now Legends Football League (not fooling anybody), though interestingly enough there are four former LFL players on the Machine roster, including Bastien.

Bastien previously played with the Machine, though having the body for the LFL, gave the MN Valkyrie two seasons, until luring three other players back to "real" football along with her.

At Monday's Machine practice, I hand over my football pads to Alicia Marchioni, one of the former lingerie league players. These special issue women's pads are designed to specifically protect the areas the LFL was interested in "highlighting." This, with other reasons, is why Bastien, who'll be playing running back, says she wouldn't return to her former team.

"I wouldn't play for the LFL again due to the lack of safety for the players and lack of respect for the women by the league commissioner and his staff."

In a separate corner of the gym, Coach Sarah Bishop leads a group through a drill, where two women at a time are facing off against one another.

"Drive, drive, drive, drive… finish, finish, finish, FINISH!"

A couple bodies hit the ground, and there's applause, and encouragement. Coaches Bishop and Baker, along with Coach Samantha Belcourt, are all former women's football players themselves and former teammates of mine, who have transitioned into coaching. The team being coached by women is a first.

After practice, I take a minute and ask Coach Baker about her experience as a coach in the league she's been a part of practically since its inception. As a player, she played 10 seasons of football, in three different leagues, and for two different teams. She also had the honor of being selected for the WFA (Women's Football Alliance – a 64 team national league) All-American team as an Offensive Line(wo)man. Twice.

"We were able to re-invent the way football was coached to us women. We as coaches know women are capable of more than football schemes designed for grade school boys."

Being coached by women who've played seems to be much appreciated and respected by the players. As Kelly Gillispie says, "The coaching style is what I'm really excited about and believe the team is really thriving from. Practices are very structured, focused – get in and work hard till the whistle blows. They expect you to learn your assignment and we still have fun doing it. Having coaches who've played in this league and can relate as you continue to learn, in my opinion, is a HUGE asset."

But, should women really be playing football? It's a "guy's sport" – isn't it a threat to femininity? That isn't how the players see it. Alicia Marchioni opines, "Many NFL players have taken ballet to improve their grace, fluidity and footwork on the field. No one questions the masculinity of these men. My playing football makes me no less feminine." The sentiment is echoed by numerous others.

Indeed, women of all types, professions and ages are playing football. The Machine roster currently has players from ages 19-40, GLBT and not, made up of realtors, policewomen, hairdressers, business owners, project managers, students and moms, among others. They've just begun their practices and are gearing up for games beginning in April. Find them on Facebook if you're interested in a new and life-changing experience. The one thing they all have in common? A desire to better themselves and compete at a high level.

Coach Baker is determined. "I am very impressed by the athleticism of the women this year. I don't remember a more physically gifted group of football players in all my years playing or coaching. We want to win. And we do that by raising the bar for the expectations – we want these women to be aggressive, knowledgeable, and well-rounded football players."

Leaving practice, I can't resist. I ask Lisa Bastien the all-important question. "So, what underwear are you wearing this season?" My fiancée shoots me a faux dirty look. Bastien laughs and replies, "I don't wear underwear. I'm wearing compression shorts with built-in football pads for protection."

This is not a gimmick. These women are athletes first, and last, and they're ready to prove it. ■


MACHINE
Photo by Sophia Hantzes

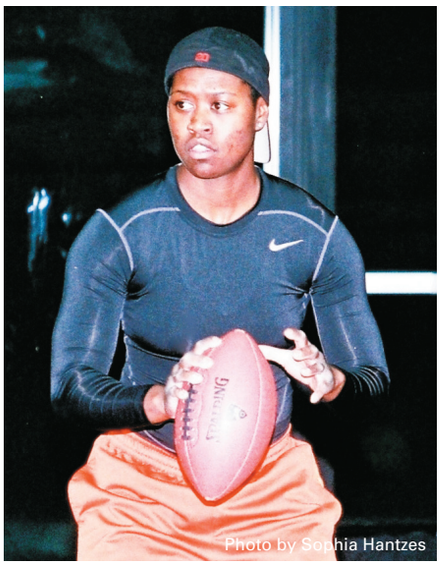
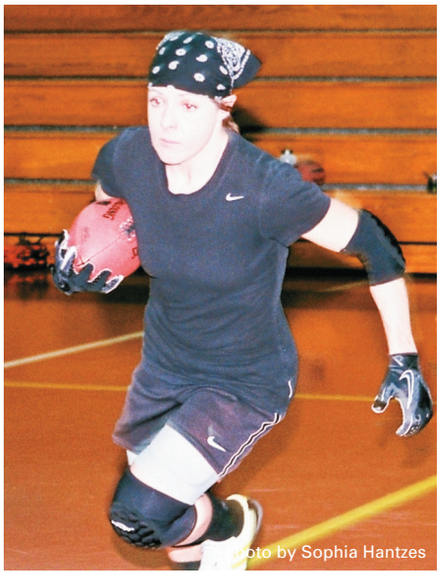

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Photo by Sophia Hantzes



The Ballad of Emmett Till. Photo by Ann Marsden

THE BALLAD OF EMMETT TILL

Through Mar. 2
Penumbra Theatre, 270 N. Kent St., St. Paul
(651) 224-3180
www.penumbratheatre.org

In August 1955, on a visit to relatives in Mississippi, 14-year-old Emmett Till made a harmless expression of attraction to a white female store clerk and for that was ganged up on by white townsmen and beaten sadistically, shot in the head, and dragged to the Tallahatchie River where he was dumped after being tied to a metal fan. The corpse was returned to Chicago, Emmett's home town, where his mother, Mamie, permitted an open casket funeral. For five days mourners were able to see evidence on the child's body of the senseless horrors he endured. Ifa Bayeza's play, *The Ballad of Emmett Till*, is recommended to anyone who wants to genuinely commemorate Black History Month. It is produced by the nation's flagship African American theatre, the Penumbra, founded by Lou Bellamy.

Penumbra Education Director Sarah Bellamy shares, "My father and I chose to stage *The Ballad of Emmett Till* in the wake of the Trayvon Martin shooting. We wanted audiences to have a space to talk about it and talk about how it is connected to a history of violence against black boys. We will not pull punches. We will not make the tragedy of this child's death easy for you. We will not stage gratuitous violence. We will not erase the flagrant racism of the environment that justified his murder. We will celebrate, with heavy hearts, the dignity and grace of a child who paid the price for our nation's tolerance of hatred and discrimination." Director Talvin Wilks notes, "Emmett Till's story is more than the injustice done to a 14-year-old boy; it is an indictment of an entire culture, an era of suppression and bigotry. Even in the crime itself were many hands – hands that pulled the trigger, hands that cracked the whip, hands that pistol whipped, hands that washed blood from the truck, hands that burned his clothes, hands that threw away his shoes because they wouldn't burn, hands that tied a fan around his neck, hands that threw his body in the Tallahatchie River, multiple hands."



Five Course Love. Photo courtesy of Hennepin Theatre Trust

FIVE COURSE LOVE

Through Feb. 16
New Century Theatre, City Center, 615 Hennepin Av., Mpls.
(612) 455-9501
www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org

Minneapolis Musical Theatre presented *Convenience*, a Gregg Coffin musical, eight years ago. Now they are presenting another Coffin piece titled *Five Course Love*. Director Steven Meerdink points out that "one of the unique aspects of Coffin's work is that he writes the entire show: script, music, and lyrics. He has a knack for breathing musical theatre life into everyday moments and life-changing events. His uncanny ability to always find the humor in these circumstances makes it easy for us to relate to so many of his scenarios. If you think you've had your share of weird dates and unusual relationships, the five entangled encounters you will witness in *Five*

Course Love will probably have you beat. Or they run a close second." Coffin's musical continues the relationship between MMT and the Hennepin Theatre Trust. The entire show is played by three actors: Ryan McGuire Grimes, Joseph Pyfferoen, and Amanda Weis. There is a gay theme presented in the German restaurant vignette.

MARY STUART

Through Mar. 1
Red Eye Theater, 15 W. 14th St., Mpls.
(800) 838-3006
www.walkingshadowcompany.org

Walking Shadow Theatre is known for its superb historical productions. A few years ago director John Heimbuch wowed audiences with his staging of *Compleat Female Stage Beauty* which looked at the issue of men playing women in the years after the English Civil War. He now turns his sure hand to surely the most fabled conflict between two women in Western history: Queen Elizabeth I v. Mary (Stuart), Queen of Scots aka Mary of Scotland. He informs that "in the mid 1500s, when Mary Stuart was ousted by her parliament, the Catholic queen of Scotland fled south to seek the protection of her cousin, Elizabeth Tudor, the Protestant queen of England. Yet, because of Mary's standing claim to the throne of England, Elizabeth responded by jailing her for more than a decade.



Stop Kiss. Photo by HM Photography LLC



Mary Stuart. Image by ELMWOOD. Reproduced by permission of Opera North

When a plot against Elizabeth's life was uncovered in 1586, her ministers took the opportunity to indict Mary for the crime – leading to Mary Stuart's execution on February 8, 1587."

It was over two centuries later, in 1800, that German playwright Friedrich Schiller adapted the Mary Stuart's story for the stage. Heimbuch observes "Schiller's *Maria Stuart* applies the ideals of German Romanticism to her story – passion, faith, intrigue, and danger. His play imagines a clash between Mary's passion and Elizabeth's intellect, calling for a style that's impassioned, melodramatic, and suspenseful with a lush language and brazen theatricality inspired by Shakespeare and Corneille."
In 2005, British playwright Peter Oswald adapted Schiller's original play into what Heimbuch calls "a more spare, modern version for the Donmar Warehouse in London. Oswald's adaptation tightens the language – keeping its imagery but removing much of its formality – and he highlights the intrigue and suspense of the story. As a result, this version is more tense, personal, and vicious than Schiller's script, as we see the intense threat these two opposing queens posed to each other's lives." It is Oswald's version that you will see at Red Eye.

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The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Other Eric Carle Favorites.

STOP KISS

Through Feb. 8
Nimbus Theatre,
1517 Central Av. NE, Mpls.
(612) 298-2783
www.facebook.com/events/565669030175008/

Fortune's Fool is producing a play from the late 1990s that tenderly portrays a relationship between two women falling in love directed by Ben Layne. *Stop Kiss* by Diana Son is best known for its take on a violent attack on two women in love. However, actress Ariel Lief holds that because the play came into being around the same time as the prolonged brutal murder of Matthew Shepard in 1998 that some productions focus too much on the attack. She holds that "the heart of this play is love. An unstoppable, life-changing love. Neither of these women had previously ever been with women. They had no real experience with gay culture at all, and had always been involved with men. But they met and fell in love."

Leaf also feels Son's play is "about identity. Though people have become more accepting of chosen identities, it is still asked of us to pick one, and not change. Callie (Leaf) and Sara (Katie Starks) are both chafing at the identities other people have assigned to them and are yearning to find themselves. They are free to choose those identities with each other because they have no preconceived notions of what the other is like. They see in the other themselves, and all the things they've wanted, but have never been brave enough to act on. They give each other that courage."

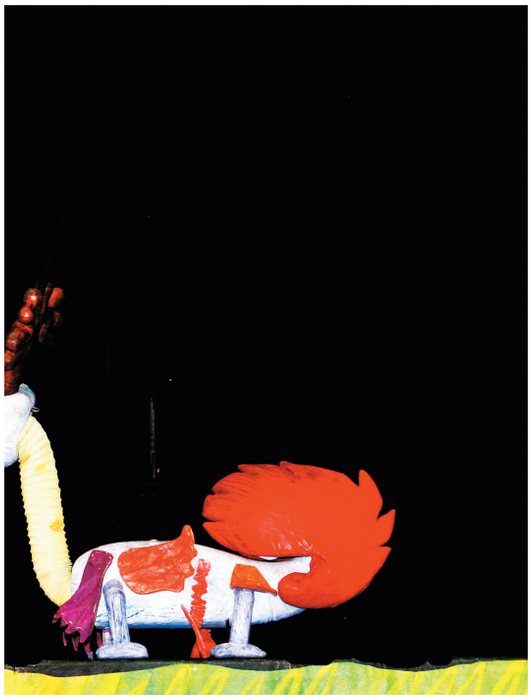


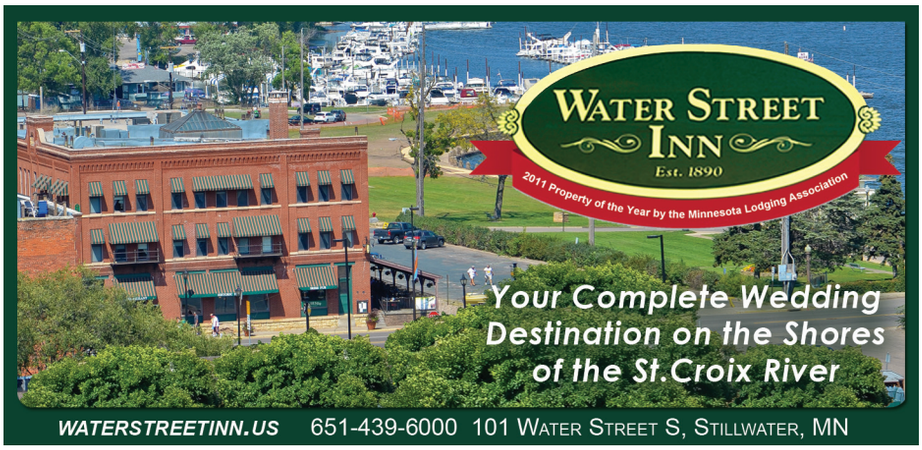
Photo by Margo Ellen Gesser

THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR AND OTHER ERIC CARLE FAVORITES

Through Feb. 23
Children's Theatre Company,
2400 Third Av. S., Mpls.
(612) 874-0400
www.childrenstheatre.org

When you start watching this dreamy touring production by Nova Scotia's Mermaid Theatre at CTC you may think you are in the presence of extraordinary high tech. However, in the brief but fascinating talk-back commencing after the 45 minute show, Jonny Thompson and Mara Zigler reveal how they and stage manager Yvonne Yip make it happen. (You'll want to hang for that. Seriously.)

The manipulaton of fabric, unusual puppets, and black light are the bedrock of this beguiling theatrical vision. Through these we are introduced to a little cloud who transforms into various formations, a chameleon whose surface becomes the same color as what it's up against physically, and a caterpillar with an appetite that leads it to its own glorious transformation. Jim Morrow has adapted Eric Carle's stories for stage with an empowering trust in the steadiness and reliability of nature. Beneath the surface is a wise blend of science and spirituality. Steven Naylor's lovely gentle music and Gordon Pinsent's resonant recorded narration enhance to hypnotic effect. ■









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OUR SCENE

ARTS & CULTURE | ON THE RECORD | BY ED HUYCK



Minnesota Beatles Project Vol. 5

It says a lot about the Beatles that, five volumes in, there are still plenty of classics for local artists to toy with on this set. It also says plenty that the band's library can be the fodder for traditional rockers, country singers, wild-eyed experimentation, and even a high school jazz band. Here, we have The Suburbs doing a typical Suburbs thing to "Taxman," maintaining the original's fire but adding a dance beat. Elsewhere, Actual Wolf and Dosh deconstruct "Your Mother Should Know" and "Blue Jay Way." The Cactus Brothers bring some old-style country swing to "This Boy," showcasing one of the numerous influences on the Beatles' original sound. It wraps up with the Denfield High School Jazz Band putting "Please Please Me" through its paces.



BRITNEY SPEARS *Britney Jean*

I keep trying to focus on the music from this more mature Spears, but I found myself distracted by questions at every turn. Midway through "Work Bitch" – really the best song here – her rap delivery reminded me of Britain's Lady Sovereign. This led me to wonder what the S.O.V. has been up to in recent years (on the British Big Brother and then hiatus, apparently) and by the time I refocused, the album was nearly over. I'd try again, but then I would wonder why Spears was singing like Gwen Stefani and that led to another whole stream of thoughts. For an album that's only about 35 minutes long, that's a lot of distractions going on, but that's better than this warmed-over pop music.



An Evening with Neil Gaiman and Amanda Palmer

The alternative "it" couple showcases their skills and styles on this massive three-disc set, culled from a 2011 tour. We get stories, poems, and thoughts from Gaiman and plenty of songs from Palmer. They also mix things up here and there, even getting the reclusive Gaiman to share his singing voice and the far-less-reclusive Palmer to share a poem or two. We get stories old and new from Gaiman, often bringing a dark and melancholy edge to the proceedings. Palmer spends time on the piano and ukulele, singing anthems to Judy Bloom, Lady Gaga and her stringed instrument of choice – one you can learn to play in an hour, or the same time to learn how to make a pipe bomb. "You do the math," she sings.



KITTEN FOREVER *Pressure*

Punk rock certainly lives through this bold-as-brass Minneapolis trio. Channeling Bikini Kill and The Go Gos and their own distinct approach to fierce rock 'n' roll, Kitten Forever gives us a quick (it was pressed to a pair of 7-inch EPs for the vinyl release), driving and absolutely brilliant album. From the opening 43 seconds of "Get Loud" to the epic two minute sweep of the final title track, the band pulls no punches on their punk-rock journey. Amazingly, all of this racket is made with just bass (Laura Larson), drums (Corrie Harrigan) and vocals (Liz Elton). Even within the confines of full-on, fuzzed-out punk rock, the trio provides some deft musical changes, like stuttering "Black Ice." This fell through the musical cracks when it came out late last summer – don't miss out now. ■

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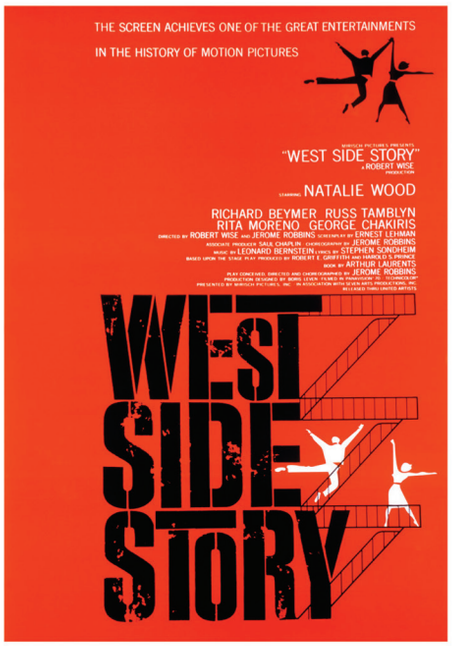
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TASTE BUDS WITH PAT EVANS | PHOTOS BY HUBERT BONNET

The Freehouse



1. Mofongo N Eggs This is a Puerto Rican inspired dish consisting of over-ripe plantains, bacon, and toast. Recommended beer pairing: No. 1. Freehouse Kolsch, (a golden-colored ale with a sweet yet crisp taste and a light body). **2.** New twist on the classic **Eggs Benedict**, crunchy English muffin topped with pork belly. **3. My personal favorite: Andouille Hash** This dish features locally-owned Kramarczuk's sausage, eggs, potato, carrot, fennel, peppers, and peas smothered in béarnaise over toast. Recommended beer pairing: No. 3 Freehouse Brown, (a mahogany-colored ale with medium caramel sweetness and body).

BEER TO BREAKFAST AND BEYOND.

Did your mom ever tell you not to miss breakfast because it's the most important meal of the day? Mine sure did, but I'm pretty certain she never thought about chasing it down with craft beer. Mimosas maybe—but at least that calls for some orange juice. The Freehouse microbrew restaurant in the Minneapolis booming North Loop is the newest spot in the Twin Cities where you can start and end your day with three squares and some suds.

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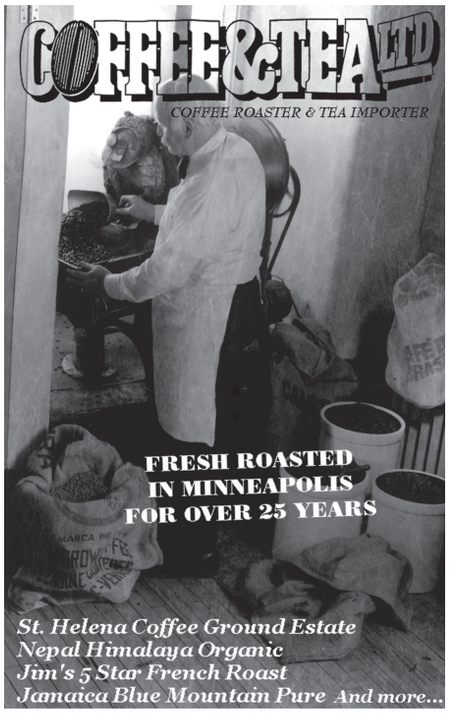
1. **Bircher Muesli** is an ode to Trix only better for you with oats, hazelnuts and topped with Fruity Pebbles. Almost too pretty to eat, but do. **2. Main dish well worth a bite: Roto Bird** is a perfectly turned rotisserie chicken with fresh and healthy kale, tomato, brew bread, and heavenly garlic mashed potatoes. Recommended beer pairing: No. 2 Freehouse IPA (Copper-colored ale, high hop with medium malt sweetness to balance a crisp medium body). 3. **Smoked salmon** Scotch eggs with mustard and dill. 4. **The Sweet Spot: Magic Brownie** requires some alchemy with a spoon where you mix salted caramel, anglaise and bacon.





CONTINUED ON PAGE 30

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Pat and Head Brewer, Pio (Tom Piotrowski); A fraction of The Freehouse beer selection.

The Lowry. Shimp and Burley know how to deliver notable neighborhood hot spots, but this is the pair's first foray into the brew pub realm.

"Growing up in Iowa, I never dreamed I'd own a restaurant that makes beer," Shimp says.

Despite the personal disconnect, opening the Freehouse on Washington Avenue seemed like a natural move with the exploding popularity of micro-brews across the country. In fact, the huge, yet inviting space may be the Cities' answer to a 21st century Tyrolean beer hall. (Servers even wear suspenders, which is always a kick.)

Just be careful how you refer to the new establishment with the (can't miss it) huge steel grain silo when you're around Shimp. "I don't like the idea of calling The Freehouse a brew pub because most people think of it as just burgers and fries," she says. "Pairing craft beer and better food at breakfast is just plain funky and fun."

If the beer and breakfast part comes as a surprise, so will the menu. Executive Chef Breck Lawrence has a talent for taking the familiar and re-imagining it. Take the Eggs Benedict. Lawrence's creation features pork belly and collard greens and the English muffins are griddled—not baked. The secret twist: he makes the yeast from St. Croix Valley Vineyard grapes. The result is a somewhat sour, crunchy and delightfully flavorful bite. I also liked the Bircher Muesli—oats and hazelnuts sprinkled with multi-colored Fruity Pebbles on top. You'll also find something deliciously different in the beautifully presented Smoked Salmon Scotch Egg with mustard and dill.



Everything on the menu, and there's a lot more than just breakfast food, is meant to be guzzled down with beer. The Freehouse has four signature beers brewed right on the premises.

"We brew every pint we pour," says Brewmaster Tim Piotrowski. "Our goal is to bring customers new flavors, but keep them approachable. We're no Surly, and we don't want to be. If you want a great beer paired with fantastic food—this is it." ■

THE FREEHOUSE
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Minneapolis
www.freehousempls.com



Good to know about The Freehouse located at 701 N. Washington: • Covers 13 thousand square feet. • Total seating capacity: 250. • Full bar. • 2 happy hours Monday-Friday. 8-a.m.-11:00 a.m. and 4 p.m. -6:00 p.m. • Special drink prices and select beer bites. • When the patio season begins they'll have about 80 seats outside. • They use spent grain from brewing process in hippy burger, pancakes and brew bread.

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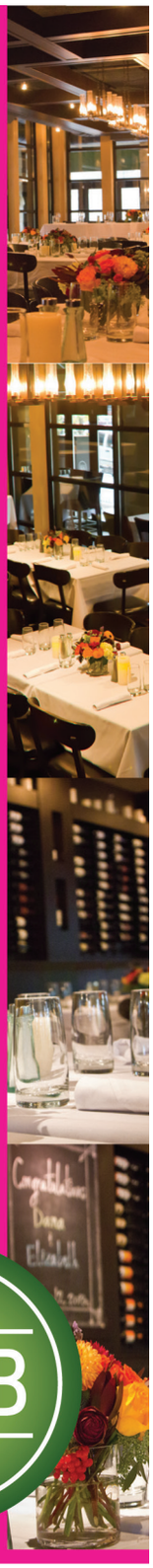
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MONTHLY EVENTS FEATURE UNDERWEAR, LEATHER, AND BEARS

The EagleBOLTbar in Downtown Minneapolis, now in its 16th year of serving the Twin Cities GLBT community, hosts the following Monthly Saturday night events:

• **Underwear Party: Every First Saturday—BOLT Video Bar.** Underwear attire is enforced. A free clothes check is available.

• **Leather Night: Every Second Saturday—Eagle Bar.** Leather dress code is enforced. Beer bust 9 PM-Midnight. EagleBOLTbar owner Ed Hopkins, who reports that local leather community members have told him they're pleased with the venue where it all began a decade-and-a-half ago, says, "It's like going back to our roots."

• **Trough Night: Every Third Saturday—Eagle Bar and BOLT Bar.** It's an all-encompassing leather, bear, and underwear night. As they say, "Is there a little pig in you?" A beer bust takes place 9 PM-Midnight.

• **Bear Night: Every Fourth Saturday—Eagle Bar and BOLT Bar.** North Country Bears hosts this event. A beer bust takes place 8-11 PM.

• **Fifth Saturday.** No special events are held this night if a month has a fifth Saturday, but you can enjoy the usual fun lineup at the bar.

There's no cover charge for any of the foregoing events, which are open to everyone, as long as they abide by any dress codes. Plus, the bar's great drinks and tasty food are always reasonably priced. What a deal!

Looking for just the right outfit for Underwear Night and/or Leather Night? Stop by Twin Cities Leather & Latté in Uptown Minneapolis. ■

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PRIDE PETS IN

BONE ADVENTURE:

AN OPEN AND WELCOMING RETAILER FOR ALL

BY SHANE LUECK | PHOTOS BY HUBERT BONNET

Originally created as a retail section in the reception area of a boarding facility in Orono, Bone Adventure owner Brian Fulmer has launched the brand into a successful family business.

As a family operation, Fulmer's three children from his previous marriage to a woman have all returned to help run the business. "What's interesting as they grow up is that they all identify as gay or lesbian," Fulmer says, who has been out for twenty years himself. Having spent time away for college and to pursue other interests (the oldest lived in New York and Boston doing musical theater), Fulmer says it's been a thrill to have his two sons and a daughter home and working with him – almost like coming full circle.

Dogs were a large part of family life as Fulmer's children were growing up since Fulmer raised and showed Alaskan malamutes. Reminiscing about photos of the kids through the years with different puppies, Fulmer fondly remembers his days with malamutes and corgis around the house. Since his show days, Fulmer has downsized to owning corgis only, which are around the Bone Adventure stores like mascots.

Fulmer, who began working with pets professionally in 1977, opened the first Bone Adventure standalone location in 1987. An active member of professional associations, Fulmer was coming across products all over the country and wanted to bring them back to a Minnesota audience and decided to open up a retail outlet to showcase his finds. "I would never have chosen to open a store if there had already been one, but the one that was there was closing, so I figured why not try it?" Fulmer says of his Wayzata location, the first to open.

It wasn't long before expanding was a natural choice. "It's been fun to see the store develop," Fulmer says. "People who came to our Wayzata store would ask, 'Why don't you have something closer in to the Cities, or farther east?'"

Now with four locations across the Metro, Bone Adventure is a staple in the pet community. Each store has its own personality based on the neighborhood it's in, according to Fulmer. "We try to create a product mix that is good for that location," he says. "Most of our foods we carry in all of the stores, with a little variety, but the other products vary. Our more contemporary things tend to be in the stores on France [Ave. S.] and in Northeast. Wayzata is more classic prints and patterns. We have people that will not just shop at one, but will go to all of them and say they prefer one based on what we carry."

Products at the store cover the basic necessities in caring for pets: high quality foods, leashes, harnesses, and more. But customers need not worry about expensive boutique prices; many report prices similar to or cheaper than major retail outlets. So, what can Bone Adventure offer that other retailers do not? Fulmer says Bone Adventure is typically known for their collar and leads designs, and customers often say they've never seen the bed styles offered by Bone Adventure. And many of the toys meet child safety standards as well as pets, something that Fulmer says can be pretty rare.



"We do carry items that you would only find with us in the Twin Cities," he says. "Our collar line, 'One of A Kind,' are actually repurposed. They're maybe vintage belts, or saddles or bridle gear from horses that are made into collars. We also offer a lot of color leather collars that we do custom. We try to do a large percentage of American-made products."

In addition, customers living farther away don't have to worry about making the trek to the Metro. Fulmer assures that they will ship products when needed, and have shipped all over Minnesota and into Wisconsin in the past. Customers hoping for the latest in pooch fashion will be disappointed, however. "We don't really carry clothing for clothing's sake," Fulmer says. "But we do carry outerwear. We carry clothing that serves a purpose, although we do get kind of wild at Halloween and Pride with the costumes."

In fact, customers flock to Bone Adventure during Pride for their pet products. Having done pet get-togethers and other pet-related events during Pride week, Bone Adventure readily stocks rainbow-themed products that time of year.

Last year, during the fight to defeat the marriage amendment in Minnesota, Bone Adventure developed a poster describing how, as a company, they strive to serve all customers equally, and encouraged "No" votes. After printing a first batch for his own stores, it wasn't long before other store owners and clients came in asking for them. "We printed a few of them, and then other store owners and clients came in asking for more," he says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

PRIDE IN PETS













"They ended up being in a lot of local businesses. It's something that the campaign to defeat the amendment asked to have for their offices. It made for some great conversations in our store and we had people coming back asking for more, so we kept printing them for as many people as wanted them."

Bone Adventure's presence at Pride isn't the only way they show they care about their clients. Pets are always welcome within the store and two of the locations even include a grooming salon as a full-service retail location for every pet owning need. And rightfully so, as grooming questions are the most frequently asked of Bone Adventure staff. "We've always been happy to be seen as an open and welcoming retailer," Fulmer says. ■

For more information, go to www.boneadventure.com.

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PRIDE IN PETS



RETIRED RACE DOGS GET A NEW LIFE

BY SHANE LUECK | PHOTOS BY SARAH ERNHART, SARAH BETH PHOTOGRAPHY

Greyhound. That one word can cause nervous twitches in prospective dog owners deciding on a breed. But fear not; the anxiety-causing attributes are merely myths. Greyhounds require more exercise? False. This breed is at greater risk of health problems? False. In truth, Greyhounds are the friendly, affectionate companions that many hope for.

"The biggest misconception we come across is that Greyhounds require much more exercise than other breeds of dogs," says Lori Rasmussen, Vice President of Greyhound Pets of America – Minnesota (GPA-MN). "People think that if they adopt a greyhound, they'll have to become runners or they'd need a big yard. In most cases, the opposite is true. Greyhounds have earned their nickname 'The 45 MPH Couch Potato!'"

Though it is true that Greyhounds are sprinters by nature and like to run around dog parks or the yard, it is generally short-lived (as in, a few minutes) before they're off to find a comfortable place to lie down. And don't worry; daily runs are not necessary as the occasional trip suits them just fine. What's better? Though jackets and boots may be necessary due to their lower body fat and short coats, Rasmussen says, "When it's bad weather, they really don't want to be outside any more than you or I would."

"The biggest misconception we come across is that Greyhounds require much more exercise than other breeds of dogs,"... "People think that if they adopt a greyhound, they'll have to become runners or they'd need a big yard."

What about those health risks? The Greyhound was bred for racing, not a show ring with a "standard" for ear size, head size, etc. "Many hereditary problems found in other large-breed dogs, are not present in racers," Rasmussen says. "In fact, in most cases, you can trace your dogs' lineage back many generations and even many centuries. They keep very good records of their dogs and the breeding of them."

Despite Greyhounds making excellent pets (especially for apartment or condo living as they rarely bark), many are still in dire need of a home. According to Rasmussen, most racers retire anywhere from two to four years of age and, with a lifespan of 12 to 14 years, retired racers have a lot of life ahead of them. "With approximately 20 active Greyhound racing tracks still operating in the US, and thousands of hounds needing homes each year, retired racing greyhounds are an excellent adoption choice," Rasmussen says. "All of the race tracks in the United States are required to use an adoption group once the dogs retire from racing. Without this relationship, a retired race dog faces an uncertain fate."

This is where GPA-MN comes into the equation. Founded in 1987, GPA-MN is the Minnesota chapter of a national 501(c)3 non-profit Greyhound adoption organization. Equipped with a mission of finding homes for ex-racing Greyhounds and educating the public on the suitability and availability of Greyhounds as pets, GPA-MN is a Twin Cities-based, volunteer-run organization.

The success of GPA-MN is thanks to its effective fostering program. When the dogs retire from the various race tracks around the country, and they enter into the care of GPA-MN, the dogs are placed into foster homes. "Since the dogs have never been in a home environment, they've never been around stairs, glass patio doors, shiny floors, etc., so they need time to acclimate to their new lives before they're adopted," Rasmussen says.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40





"When we adopt a dog to a family, we want it to be forever; so, by having the dogs in foster homes first, we can get a good idea of the individual personalities of each dog."

With the hopes of finding a "forever home" for the retired racers, GPA-MN has established a system to match a dog with its new home. When a person or family decides a Greyhound is for them, they submit an application online, followed by a phone interview initiated by GPA-MN. Information gained from the interview is given to a matching committee, to be combined with any new found information about the dogs from the foster families.

"When an applicant's circumstances mesh with the dog's needs, we arrange for the applicants to meet the dog," Rasmussen says. "If a love connection is made, the adoption is completed at that time. We believe that this process, although a bit lengthier than some adoption groups, is critical to finding forever homes for our hounds." ■

For more information about GPA-MN, go to www.gpa-mn.org; for more distinctive pet photography, go to www.sarahbethphotography.com.



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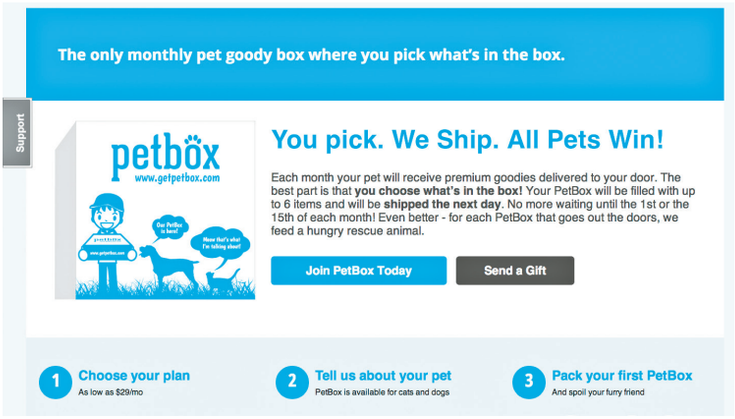
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2



3



4



5



PRIDE PETS

IN



ASK THE VET:

DR. DAN ANDERSON

BY SHANE LUECK

As an ongoing part of Lavender's Pet Issue, Lavender partners with a veterinarian for a Q&A. If you have a question you'd like answered by a veterinarian, email it to editor@lavendermagazine.com.

February is National Pet Dental Health Month. Are there any signs of dental disease I should be looking out for that are often overlooked by owners? Is dental care different between dogs and cats?

Many of the first signs of dental disease are missed because most of us do not regularly look into our pet's mouths. Regular exams by your veterinarian will help you to decide whether your pet needs a dental cleaning. The most obvious sign that there may be dental disease is "bad breath." Bad breath is never normal, and chances are that they already have some degree of dental disease. To catch problems early, regularly examine your pet's teeth for discoloration and buildup of tartar or calculus, which is a tan to brown material that accumulates near the gums. Check to see if any of the teeth are chipped, broken or loose. Also exam-



ine the gums, looking for redness or puffiness. A swelling or non-healing sore on the face or jaw may indicate an abscessed tooth.

Sometimes behavioral changes can indicate a problem. Reluctance to chew food or rawhides, or fetch a favorite ball, or play "tug of war" may be caused by an injured tooth or other mouth pain. If you see any of these signs, have your pet evaluated by your veterinarian.

Dental care is essentially the same for both cats and dogs. The best way to help prevent dental disease is to brush the teeth. This should be done on a daily basis with a toothbrush or finger brush and a pet toothpaste. Starting when your pet is a puppy or kitten is best. Most older pets will allow us to brush the teeth if we are gentle and patient, and, of course, generous with rewards. When dental disease is already present, brushing may be painful, and a dental cleaning at your vet is recommended before brushing. If you cannot brush your pet's teeth, dental rinses and tartar control/antibacterial chews can be helpful. Even with regular brushing, most pets older than 2 or 3 years old will need yearly professional dental cleanings…just like humans!

It gets so cold during the winter, making it difficult to go outside. But I still want to make sure that my dog is getting the exercise he needs. How can I do this while making sure frostbite isn't an issue?

Tolerance to the cold will vary from dog to dog. Many factors play a role in how comfortable your dog will feel. Coat length, body fat, age, health and activity level will all play a role. Long-coated dogs are more tolerant than short-coated dogs. Thin dogs will become colder faster. Elderly dogs, especially those with arthritis, will be more sensitive to the cold. Puppies become colder faster. Dogs with health problems such as diabetes or kidney disease, are less able to regulate their body temperature. A dog who is running or playing intensely will stay warmer longer.

No matter what type of dog you have, outdoor time will need to be limited, and special precautions taken, when cold weather sets in. All breeds of dogs can suffer from hypothermia and frostbite if they are outside too long. Signs that your dog needs to go inside include shivering, lifting paws up off the ground, reluctance to continue walking, chewing the feet, weakness or lethargy.

A sweater or coat will help to keep your dog warm. Booties help keep the feet warm and protect them from chemicals used to melt ice. These chemicals can cause dryness and cracking of the pads. If booties are not an option, you should clean your dog's paws of any chemicals encountered on your walk. You may need to keep the hair clipped on the underside of the paws to help prevent snow build-up during walks.

Dog day care centers often have a large indoor play area. You may wish to consider this option if your dog is not getting enough exercise outdoors. I once had a client who bought two treadmills, one for him and one for the dog, so they could walk side by side indoors! It worked great for them, and illustrates the fact that sometimes we need to be creative to make it through our long winter.

The take-home message is to pay attention to the temperature, know your dog's limits, and take the proper precautions to make being outdoors enjoyable for both you and your pet.

I live in an apartment, and I'm quite sure my neighbors don't appreciate all of the barking. How can I keep my pet quieter?

Behavior in dogs is quite complex and may need the attention of your veterinarian or a dog behaviorist. Barking can have different triggers, and therefore different solutions. Anxiety is probably the most common cause. There are some simple things that you may wish to try first.

First and foremost, make sure that your dog is getting plenty of exercise. Some dogs will require much more exercise than others. Always remember, a tired dog is a good dog!

Try leaving on a radio or television. This will reduce the noises your dog hears from outside that may be initiating the barking.

Try giving your dog a rawhide or a toy that can be stuffed with treats before you leave. This may help occupy his or her time.

Ignore your dog for 5 minutes before you leave and when you get home. An emotional farewell and greeting may seem nice to us, but it can cause more distress when you are leaving, and heightened anxiety about when you will return.

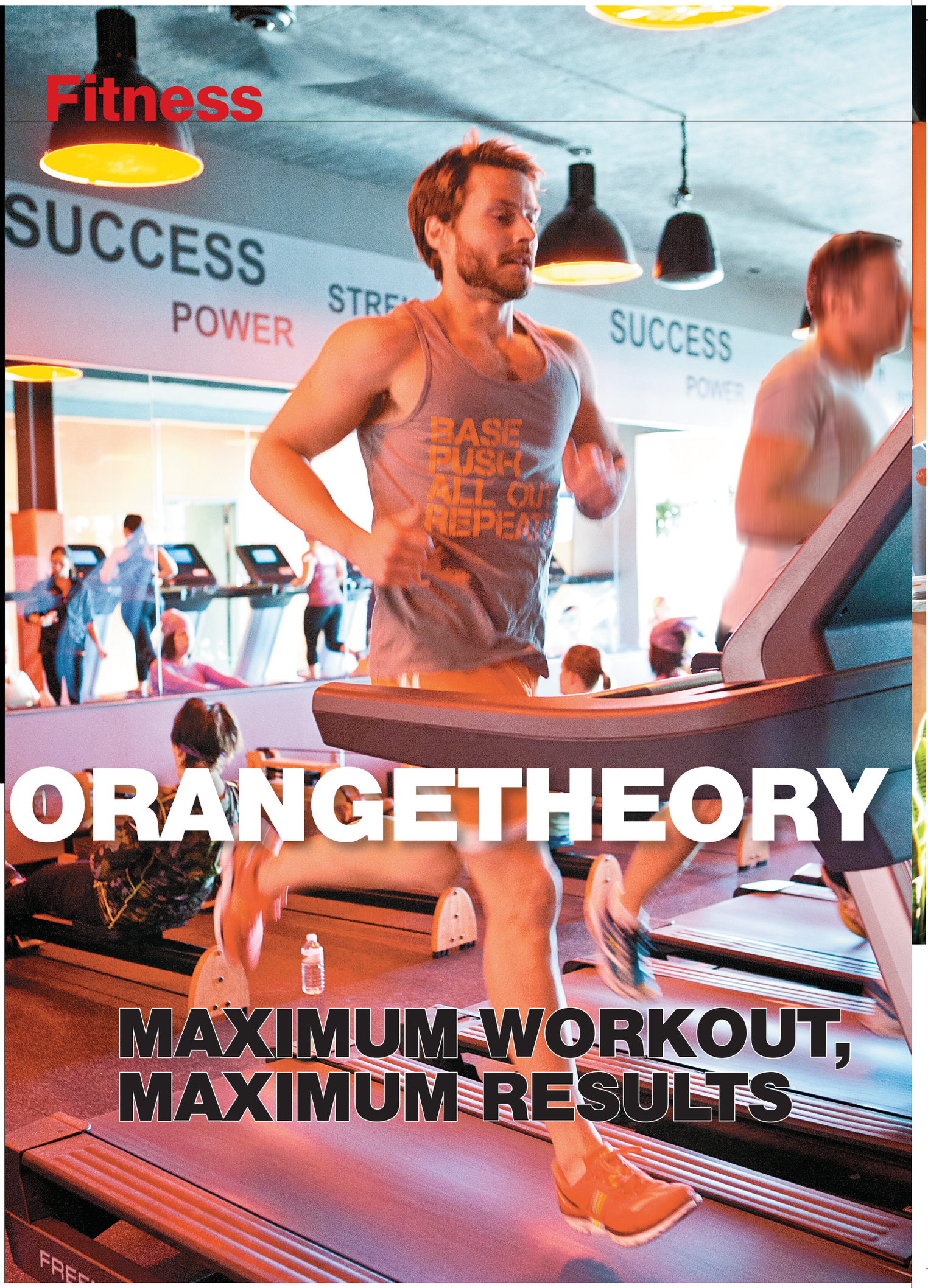
Anti-anxiety pheromones work well for some dogs. It is a compound that is secreted by nursing mothers that has a calming effect on dogs. They come in a spray or a room diffuser.

Citronella bark collars can be effective and do not cause any pain to your dog. When the dog barks, citronella is released from the collar, distracting the dog. Shock collars should be avoided, and used only as a last resort. They can actually make the problem worse.

If these measures fail, make an appointment with your veterinarian. You can discuss the possible causes of the problem, and then pursue solutions. You may be prescribed an anti-anxiety medication, given further recommendations, or referred to a behaviorist. Good Luck! ■

Dr. Dan Anderson graduated from the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine in 1991. He is the owner of Larpenteur Animal Hospital. He and his partner, Mike, have two chihuahuas, Edith and Olive.

Fitness



ORANGETHEORY

MAXIMUM WORKOUT, MAXIMUM RESULTS



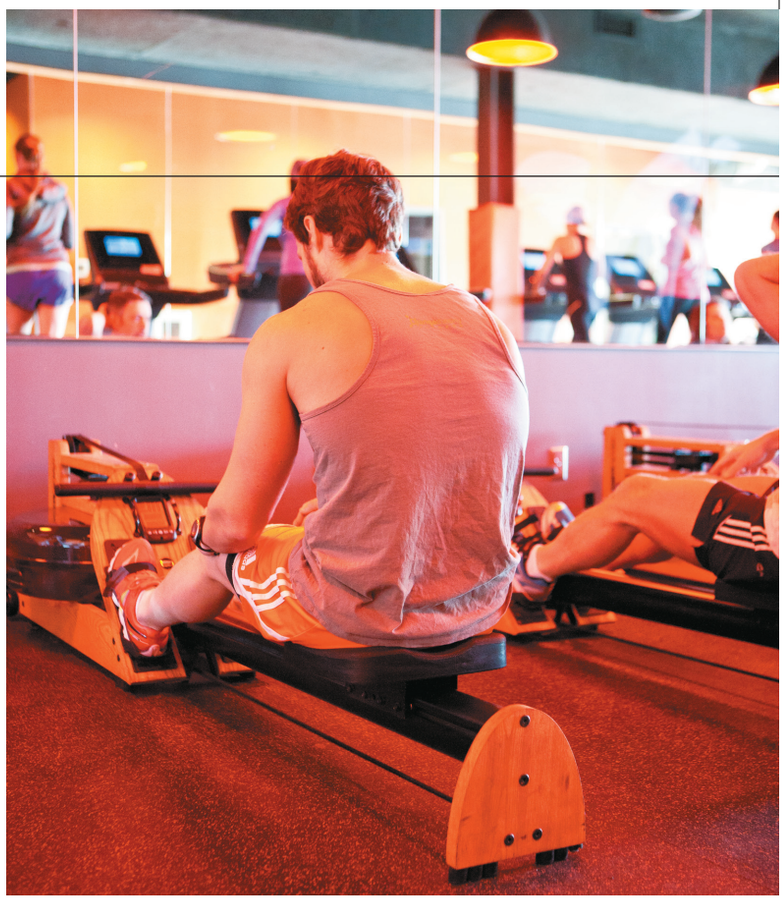
FITNESS:

As the freshness of a new year slowly fades away (and as the winter doldrums slowly begin to claim us all), it's easy to let New Year's Resolutions dissolve into distant memories of idealistic self-improvement. A workout becomes the last thing on anyone's mind as the lights dim in the office and rush hour traffic is the only thing standing in the way of ordering takeout and starting a Netflix marathon. But what if your gym wasn't a typical gym? What if your workouts were designed specifically to give you the best results without signing your life away to hours and hours on the treadmill? At Orangetheory Fitness, an enjoyable, personalized workout designed to maximize your time DOES exist, and you'll be in and out the door in just a little over an hour.

Orangetheory Fitness was created by Ellen Latham, founder and creator of "The Ultimate Workout," a highly successful interval workout program. Latham used "The Ultimate Workout" to build the foundation for Orangetheory Fitness, creating a workout that is accessible yet challenging to exercisers of all levels. Orangetheory Fitness is sweeping the nation, and it has become increasingly popular in the Midwest. Out of the 69 locations across the United States and Canada, three studios are located in the Twin Cities Metro area. In addition to the existing locations in Uptown Minneapolis, Plymouth, and Maple Grove, a new studio in Apple Valley will be completed soon.

Orangetheory Fitness utilizes

CONTINUED ON PAGE 48



the increasingly popular "high-intensity interval workout" for exercisers to achieve great results. A high-intensity interval workout consists of multiple exercises done at a high intensity; short, hard blasts of activity are paired with brief moments of rest to create circuits of cardio and strength training exercise. Mike Calawerts, the General Manager and head trainer at Orangetheory Fitness on West Lake Street, explains that the Orange 60 workout is a five-zone interval heart-rate training. "The workout uses rowing, treadmill exercise, and different events in the weight room (dumbbells, kettlebells, TRX strap training, Bosu balls—all of the toys) to train the body for strength and endurance. This ultimately contributes to weight-loss and improved physical performance."

A unique aspect of the Orangetheory Fitness program is the amount of data used to create the ideal workout for each participant. Calawerts notes, "It's all heart rate guided. When members come in, we figure out their heart rate zones for them. We want to get people into the 'Orange Zone' which is 84-91% of a person's maximum heart rate for twelve to twenty minutes." The workout is designed to produce Excess Post-Exercise Oxygen Consumption (or EPOC), which allows the body to burn 200-400 additional calories for 24-36 hours after the workout. In order to make up for oxygen lost during exercise, the body metabolizes body fat at an increased level to recover. In less scientific terms, EPOC is referred to as "after burn," a state where you continue to burn calories after an intense workout has ended.

What sets Orangetheory Fitness apart from other high intensity workouts is that members of Orangetheory are able to discover their true exercise capabilities through the use of individual heart rate monitors. In a traditional workout, people don't have the luxury of seeing their true heart rate data and may not reach the anaerobic threshold (84-91% of maximum heart rate), which is where the most beneficial exercise takes place. Calawerts states, "In my experience, most people regularly work out in a range between 60-80% of their maximum. While there are really good benefits to working out at that level, to really transform your body, that work has to be at a higher level." Calawerts explains that all workouts at Orangetheory are monitored by trainers who keep an eye on people's numbers to be certain that members are getting challenging, yet safe, workouts in the most ideal zone for weight loss. Exercisers are able to actually see if they are reaching their target heart rates and are therefore able to hold themselves accountable for the effort they put in. After the workout, participants receive copies of their heart rate levels—instant proof of tough work and progress.

Because the workout is modifiable and monitored by heart rate monitors, participants don't need to worry about being pushed to an intensity that is unsafe for their fitness levels. Calawerts assures, "We have a safe and effective measure of your abilities because our coaches can track exactly what you're doing. If we think you're working too hard, we'll tell you to slow down. Sometimes we have to tell our veterans to work out harder to hit their numbers." This close monitoring creates a safe environment for people to push their physical boundaries. Calawerts encourages people of all fitness levels to try Orangetheory Fitness. "Whatever your fitness level is, we can coach you into your Orange zone whether you walk, jog, run, bike, or elliptical. It's typical for a class to include a high-end recreational triathlete next to a grandmother of five next to a fit mother next to someone who is fairly nervous about starting a workout."

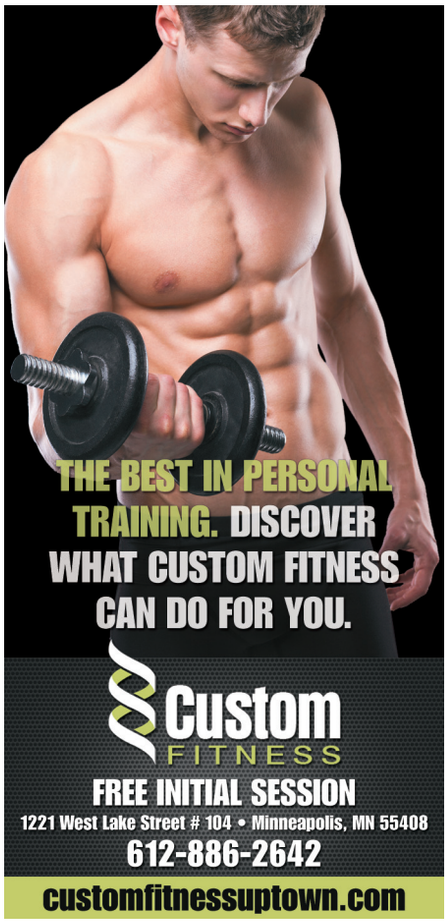
Many people experience some anxiety when it comes to working out in a group—even die-hard athletes like Calawerts get nervous before starting a new fitness program. But Calawerts encourages people to try a class for free and see for themselves. "The atmosphere is welcoming and friendly…as a personal trainer, I love seeing how motivated and encouraging people are when they're here." While people can work out with an intensity that is safest for the individual, people still receive the sense of support and motivation that comes with working out in a group.

For people who don't think they have time to get in shape, Calawerts notes that Orangetheory Fitness is a great way to maximize the time you spend at the gym. Even three to five hour-long sessions per week can result in major improvements. Members are allowed to choose the amount of exercise that is right for their bodies and their schedules; while some members may choose to attend sessions five days per week, others enjoy the benefits of one Orangetheory workout per week. A serious fitness guru might choose to attend sessions in addition to other workout routines, while others may stick simply to Orangetheory sessions. No matter what your current fitness routine looks like, there's a place for an intense Orangetheory workout.

Orangetheory Fitness offers flexible pricing with a variety of memberships and packages to choose from. Participants can choose from basic memberships or premier unlimited memberships, or they can simply buy packages for a certain number of classes. Plans range between $59-159 (according to the amount of classes taken per week), which is comparative to the cost of fitness plans at other facilities. Before purchasing a package, potential members are encouraged to take advantage of a one-week free trial to see what everyone is raving about!

Orangetheory Fitness is changing the way our society views workout regimens. "We maximize your hour. You don't come in and do the traditional 40 minutes of cardio and 60 minutes of weight-training. We get all of that done with the instruction of a coach and heart rate-guided training in 60 minutes." Calawerts believes that people who work out at Orangetheory Fitness are making the best investment possible for both their health and wallet. "You get more bang for your buck, working harder for a short duration." With Orangetheory Fitness, you'll be able to enjoy the time you put in at the gym while still having time for everything else life has to offer. ■

For more information, go to www.orangetheoryfitness.com/studio-locations/minneapolis-minnesota/



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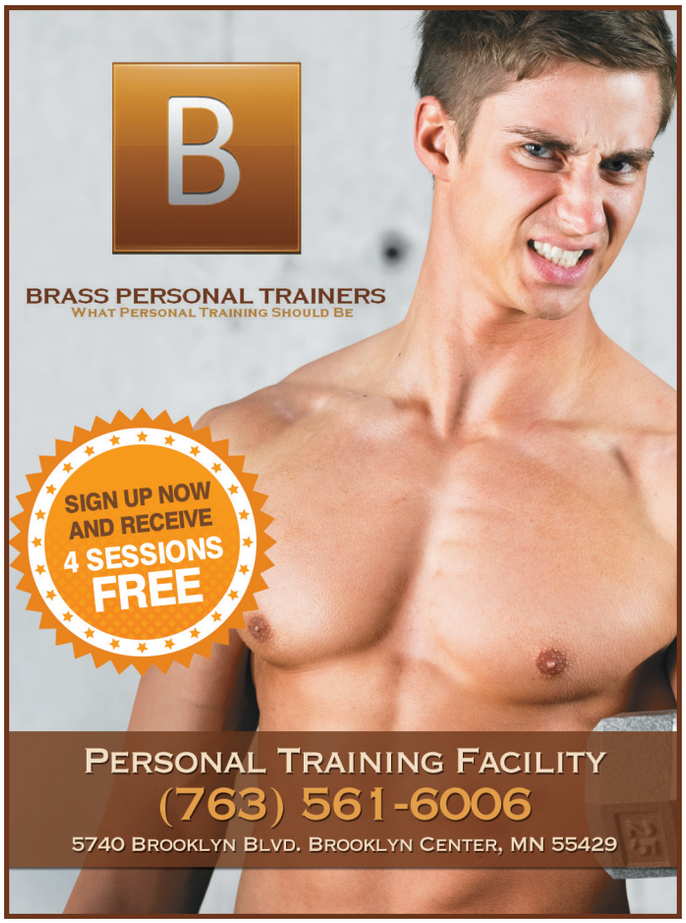
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BEST PLACES TO WORK 2014 for LGBT Equality 100% CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX







FINDING THE RIGHT TRAINER FOR YOU

It might seem that every third person you hear is certified as a personal trainer or yoga teacher. Heck, you probably have a family member who was recently certified. Should you really trust them though? What exactly should you look for in a trainer?

CONSIDER YOUR PERSONALITY

Are you easy going, anxious, type-A, cocky, or prone to outbursts? Ask yourself, what kind of personality fits best for me? If you are easy going and quiet, you may want your trainer's personality to be down to earth and focused. However, don't just hire a friend or family member who can't give it to you straight. You want them to keep you accountable to your plan.

Anxious clients may want to go for a calm and relaxing trainer. Nevertheless, these same people may thrive on a high energy personality and even having the trainer get in their face a little. Some clients thrive on knowing exactly why they are doing the exercises they do. During your consultation, it's important to convey your personality to your potential trainer.

MAKE SURE THEIR SPECIALTY IS YOUR PRIMARY GOAL

Find out what your potential trainer's specialty is. Your potential trainer is probably best at training for one particular type of goal. These goals typically include weight loss, toning, athletic training, or muscular gain (bodybuilding). If your goal is getting ripped, make sure your potential trainer specializes in this. In my case, I get mostly referrals, so I don't have to show clients proof – they've already seen it. If, however, you are meeting your potential trainer without having seen any

results, it's a good idea to ask for some referrals or request some before and after pictures of their clients. If possible, talk to their clients in person.

Does your potential trainer's body reflect their specialty? If you're looking to get ripped yourself, you should expect to see a ripped potential trainer! If you don't, you have a right to inquire about this. Some trainers who may not look like Hercules may have recently lost two hundred pounds, making them look normal. This is a massive accomplishment. If you're looking for weight loss, this trainer could be a perfect fit for you because they know exactly what you have been through.

CERTIFICATIONS AND OTHER CREDENTIALS

Unlike the medical profession, certification in the personal training realm doesn't mean much other than you studied and memorized some facts. Your potential trainer still does need to be certified however. There is an abundance of certifications, but you should typically look for NSCA, ACSM, NASM, ISSA, NPTI, or ACE. Even better than a certification is a degree in exercise science, sports science, kinesiology, or a similar field. Even with that, do your homework. It's best to review their internships, clubs they've worked at, and publications they've written. Look at any videos they've posted. What is their quality of materials? This will give you a good idea of what style of training they do.

Regardless of all the paper credentials, look for a trainer who has passion. This is key in motivating clients. If your potential trainer is passionate about their service, you will be impassioned about your training. How can you know if they have passion? They will express enthusiasm, interest in your goals, supportiveness (even in the consultation), and use words like "excited," "thrilled," and "let's get this started." While these may sound cheesy, this is your life and health we're talking about, not simply deciding what color the bathroom rug will to be.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR AT THE CONSULTATION

PROVIDING WHAT YOU REALLY NEED

Let's assume you know you can do a reasonable nutrition program, but you know you need accountability to be successful on your diet. If your potential trainer keeps talking about the specialized training program they want you on, they're missing the point. If they emphasize what you really need in their own words and methods, this not only means they're listening to you, it can mean you are on your way to achieving your goals. A good potential trainer will listen for what you really need, not necessarily what they want.

CONNECTION

The second factor is connection. Do you feel a connection at your consultation? If you've ever been out on a date and you didn't connect with that person, there's a reason why there's no real possible future. Connecting helps build motivation, trust, and a good relationship between you and your trainer. At the consultation, if they're all business, that's not good enough. It's always preferable to have a connection if you will be spending a significant amount of time with that person.

ASSESSMENT

Hopefully, your potential trainer will offer you an assessment. This should give you an idea how they work with their clients. It can be a little uncomfortable weighing in, taking measurements, or taking pictures. Understand, however, that these can be extremely valuable in determining the best exercises and progressions for your body. Your potential trainer should try to make you feel at ease. Typically, the more information your potential trainer gathers, the better your program can be. At a minimum, your trainer should include these components for your assessment:

- Current health conditions (especially if it includes the heart)
- Medications and supplementation
- Previous exercise history
- Previous injuries or joint pain
- Nutritional allergies or sensitivities
- Static and moving assessment

RATES

Trainers can range from 5 to 500 dollars per session. Just because a trainer is expensive, however, does not mean they can help you get the body of your dreams. I've seen many Hollywood and Internet trainers gain fortune and fame through mass marketing and incredible training principles which I know don't work. Very cheap rates however indicate less business experience and possibly a new trainer to the business. Ask yourself, "What can I realistically afford?" Remember, you'll need to see enough of your trainer to be able to stay on track. If you can't afford to see your trainer enough, you won't stay motivated.

Personal training is an investment in your health. The greater the monetary amount, the greater the investment. Don't forget, however, making significant changes to your body is hard work. While your trainer should establish a good plan to reach your goals, motivate you, and keep you accountable, you are the one who needs to show up and be consistent.

ONLINE TRAINER

Online training means your trainer will not physically see you, but will provide a training or nutritional plan electronically. Unless you've done at least one year of consistent personal training, I recommend most people begin with seeing their trainer personally. Before beginning online training, it's critical to have a foundation of the different forms of push ups, dumbbell or barbell pressing, rows, chin ups (if not overweight), squats, deadlifts, hip thrusts, and planks. If you are a type-A person who has intrinsically high motivation, online training may be a good fit for you. You should still be able to ask your online trainer questions about your training or nutritional plan. .

I can attest that while online training is highly convenient, it is not as enjoyable nor as motivating as seeing your trainer in the flesh. With my last trainer who was online, there were some exercises which I interpreted differently than my trainer. If you go with an online trainer, I highly recommend getting very specific instructions and videos on your exercises. You should also create videos of your training sessions and especially for challenging exercises for your online trainer to see and critique.

CONCLUSION

Although your trainer can help you make significant changes, you are the one who must work the hardest and be consistent. If you can find a trainer whose personality is a good match, is affordable for you to see them enough, and keeps you accountable, you have probably made a good choice. Now, go get the body of your dreams! ■

Von Gillette is an evidence-based fitness and nutrition professional specializing in weight loss in the Twin Cities. www.vongillette.com

LEATHER LIFE | BY STEVE LENIUS | PHOTOS BY JOSEPH D.R. OLEARY

"Of Beards and Men"

On one level, *Of Beards and Men,* a brilliant new photo book by photographer and designer Joseph D.R. OLeary, is just what it says it is—photos of 140 men with beards or other facial hair.

Yet the book is also so much more, on so many levels. It's a photographic essay on contemporary masculinity. It's 140 individual character studies. It's a stellar photographic project; a series of rich and luminous portraits by a photographer (himself a bearded gentleman) who possesses a keen eye for color, mood and detail, and a polished sense of design that allows him to present the photographs in a beautiful and elegant setting.

In this book we meet these 140 men and get to know them. We also meet and get to know OLeary, because the book is OLeary's creation and he did almost everything necessary to create it. He rounded up the models, spent hours taking photographs, selected the the best ones for the book, designed every aspect of the book, set the type, laid out the pages, dealt with the printers (personally checking the printed pages as they came off the press) and the bookbinders (even folding the dust covers and shrink-wrapping books himself). This is an artisan's book, an inspired work of art and a concrete realization of OLeary's vision spread over a 212-page canvas. OLeary has been taking photographs since he was a boy and has run a design firm called Veto Design since 1992, so he is well qualified to produce such a beautiful book.



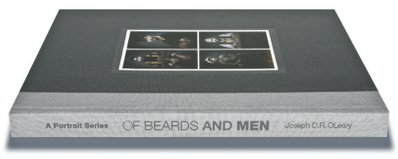
(Above) Joseph D.R. OLeary self portrait; Book cover.

The book exists because of a Kickstarter campaign. (Readers of this column may remember reading recently about another book created with the help of a Kickstarter campaign, *American Ecstasy,* by New York-based photographer Barbara Nitke.)

The world—literally—has noticed OLeary's efforts. Both OLeary and the book have gotten press coverage all over the world and exhibitions in New Hampshire, Virginia, Florida, Colorado, and The Netherlands.

OLeary found his bearded subjects in several ways—distributing postcards announcing and publicizing the project, social media and word of mouth. His bearded subjects ventured out to OLeary's photo studio, which is in a remodeled barn on the farm where he lives with his partner. OLeary's subjects were instructed to bring a few changes of clothes and objects that they felt expressed them "professionally, physically or spiritually."

The photo shoots were long. "I was enjoying the conversation so much," says OLeary. "We had great conversations." OLeary says he felt he really got to know them as he photographed them: "I felt like, in a way, these guys have all become my brothers." Because the photos are supple-









Images from the book, (Clockwise from top) Chris, Nellie, John.







Images from the book, (Clockwise from top) Tim, Jesse, Justin.

mented with capsule biographies, readers feel they get to know these men, too. (In fact, you already might know some of the guys in the book if you spend any time at the Minneapolis Eagle.)

The book also includes essays by art critic George Slade, photographer/educator Douglas Beardsley, Twin Cities arts writer Andy Sturdevant, and author and photo historian Vicki Goldberg.

OLeary is pleased with the way the book turned out and pleased with the Kickstarter campaign that enabled him to create it. He feels the book is for everyone—male or female, straight or gay.

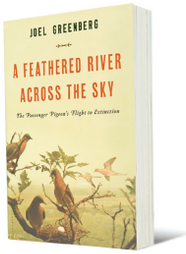
Of Beards and Men was printed and bound in Minnesota. A limited edition of 1,250 books have been printed and are available in three formats: softcover, hardcover and hardcover with slipcase. Copies of the book are available at the author/photographer's website, www.ofbeardsandmen.com, or at www.amazon.com/shops/ofbeardsandmen. ■

(Special Online Extra: Visit Lavender's website for an exclusive interview with Joseph D.R. OLeary conducted by your humble columnist.)

OUR AFFAIRS

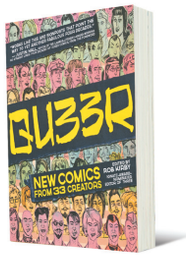
BOOKS | BY E.B. BOATNER

A Feathered River Across the Sky: The Passenger Pigeon's Flight to Extinction
Joel Greenberg
Bloomsbury
$26



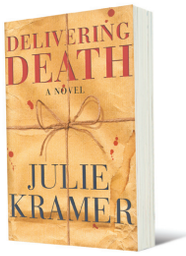
September 2014 marks the hundredth anniversary of the death in the Cincinnati Zoo of Martha, the last extant passenger pigeon. This uniquely American bird, whose massed flights literally blotted out the sun, had been hunted for food by natives for centuries, but between increased European settlers and growing railway distribution, in a mere half-century from 1860, the species went from an estimated three billion to zero. The annual slaughter for food, fun, and profit was relentless and profligate, encompassing the birds' entire range, from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, the Midwest to Maine: In 1878, the St. Paul Sportsman's Club shooting contest offered 10,000 live targets. Greenberg's history is both an elegy for a lost species and a cautionary tale for our own future.

QU33R: New Comics from 33 Creators
Ed. Rob Kirby
First Northwest Press
$29.99



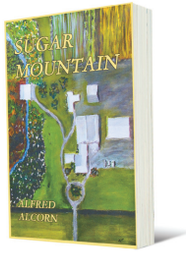
Thirty-three–33–talents, new and established, are featured in this all-new anthology of queer comic tales. Among them are Eric Orner's "Porno," Rob Kirby's "Music for No Boyfriends," Dianne Dimassa's "Born Qu33r," Rick Worley's "For Fletch and Ruski, Spooner and Calico," Carrie McNinch's "Toot Toot Heyyyyyyy Beep Beep," and Terrence Griep and Rob Kirby's "The Second Most Asked Question," in which local writer/pro-wrestler tells all. This full-color collection by queer publisher First Northwest Press covers the entire spectrum of the rainbow, young love, old love, no love – drama in the past and present, and through all the rainbow's angstroms of gender, sex, race and class, happiness and despair. These stories will bear you along on a fresh tide of Qu33r life heading into your future.

Delivering Death
Julie Kramer
Emily Bestler Books
$24.99



It's never a good morning when an anonymous package of human teeth is delivered to your desk. But TV reporter Riley Spartz takes up to the challenge and sets off to unravel the mystery and identify their newly edentate owner. The trail is diffuse, leading to a lowlife crook, now dead, and white-collar criminal Jack Clemens, now doing time. Both were involved in an elaborate, widespread and highly profitable identity theft scheme. While Riley champs at the bit to cover these meaty crimes, her boss and nemesis is pushing for coverage for a mass marriage extravaganza at the Mall of America. Not only is this pure fluff in Riley's mind, but she'd rather avoid ex-fiancé, Nick Garnett, MOA's head of security. Neatly crafted, highly readable.

Sugar Mountain
Alfred Alcorn
Caravel Press
$18.45



Reserve some quality time: once you start *Sugar Mountain* you won't be putting it down. Alcorn's stylish literary thriller envisions a world devastated by a mutant avian flu. In anticipation of just such an eventuality, Cyrus Arkwright, seventyish family patriarch, and his wife Grace, have been transforming the family farm in western Massachusetts into a self-sustaining refuge for their kin and their families. And they come. As do the frightened and unprepared; as do the McFeralls, neighboring outlaw cousins who for decades have claimed ownership of Sugar Mountain. Alcorn handles predictable character types in unpredictable ways, interleaving the main narrative with a member's personal diary; this device and the author's use of the present tense pulls the reader into the novel's heart for the duration. ■





RIDE REVIEW | BY RANDY STERN | PHOTOS BY RANDY STERN

2014 Honda Accord Hybrid



Trying to build a better Hybrid is akin to trying to build a better mousetrap.

The key to both is ingenuity. The idea is the end result, but getting there takes a few tries at the formula in order to achieve the desired result. Getting there will take a few tries at getting it right. If you fail, you have to try again.

It might take a part or a mechanism to get it right. It could take a complete redesign to achieve the desired result from a different approach. Depending on what it takes to get to the ultimate goal, one thing is certain – the path to get there will be tough, but well worth it.

Over a decade ago, Honda and Toyota took different approaches to combining an internal combustion engine with an electric motor and a battery pack. While Toyota nearly perfected the formula – and sold it to its rivals – Honda had a bit of trouble selling their approach to the Hybrid. Was it too complicated? Was it even a full hybrid? Was it even worth the effort to sell its Integrated Motor Assist to a market already enamored with Toyota's Hybrid Synergy Drive and its cousins?

Honda went back to the drawing board. They came up with a different approach to the Hybrid. Their first application of the new system is now under the hood of its best selling model in America.

This was the second time around for the Honda Accord Hybrid. Two generations ago, Honda mated the IMA system to one of their

V6s. While its competition concentrated on four-cylinder Atkinson Cycle engines with electric motors, Accord touted better economy for its big engine without seeing the entire vision of mid-sized hybrids. The idea was to achieve higher fuel economy and lower emissions – MPG numbers in the 30s and 40s were dancing around the Accord's lower fuel consumption.

This time around, Honda was ready. In this current generation, Honda went with an Earth Dreams 2.0 liter, four-cylinder engine – newly exclusive to this system – added an electric motor, a battery pack, and its new continuously variable transmission into an integrated power management system. Internally, Honda calls this their Sport Hybrid Intelligent Multi Mode Drive (i-MMD).

How does it work? Well…it is just absolutely fine. The 2.0 liter Earth Dreams engine alone offers up 141 horsepower and 122 foot-pounds of torque. Add the electric motor, and your power rating goes up to a combined 196 horsepower, yet it has its own rating of 166 horsepower with 226 foot-pounds of torque.

Taking power to the front wheels is a continuously variable transmission – the best match for any hybrid. The flexibility of the CVT allows seamless transitions between the gas and electric motor and smooth delivery of power when needed. You do hear the gas engine when you depress the accelerator on those occasions when you need it. For the most part, the operation is quiet – as you expect from an Accord.

This is where the quandary begins. It is a hybrid – a gas engine combined with an electric motor. Yet, it is a Honda Accord. If you own one, you will understand where the quandary begins.

Unlike most hybrids, the Accord does not exactly feel like one. It drives like a regular Accord – specifically a four-cylinder model. The instrumentation, the grille, the alloy wheels, and some of badging may look different. Even if you replace it with the components from a normal Accord, one might not tell the difference.

There are a few marked differences, however. Starting up is quiet – for the most part. The only way you know you started up is a series of chimes and the green "Ready" light on the instrument cluster. You will hear the gas engine rev up – and that is about it. Still, the start-up is instant and you could easily get going even in the coldest of mornings.

Is it quiet every other time? For the most part, again, yes. The Accord is one of the quieter cars in its class. You do hear some tire noise from the low-rolling resistance Michelins on some surfaces and, when the accelerator is pressed, the gas engine will wind up with the CVT. The latter is discerning since it felt like it was stuck in a gear under hard acceleration. The CVT was definitely the culprit in that situation.

The base Hybrid is equipped similarly to a four-cylinder EX model. You get a reversing camera along with a right-side, blind-spot camera when engaging the turn signal. There is an AM/FM radio with Bluetooth, USB, and Auxiliary port connections, dual zone climate control, and power seats.

The seats are as comfortable and supportive as they are on the regular EX four-cylinder sedan. Taller drivers may want to find a place behind the wheel that would be lower than you are used to in a mid-sized sedan. Rear seat room has not been compromised by the battery pack behind it. You still get plenty of room for two adults – maybe three. However, those rear seat backs do not fold down for extra cargo because of the aforementioned battery pack. Trunk space is a bit shallower, but big enough to swallow an extended weekend's worth of luggage for four.

Honda claims you could get up to 50MPG on the new hybrid. You could, but the reality in this test environment was different, simulating every day commuting and mixing city streets and freeways. The fuel economy on the hybrid ended up being 33.8MPG.

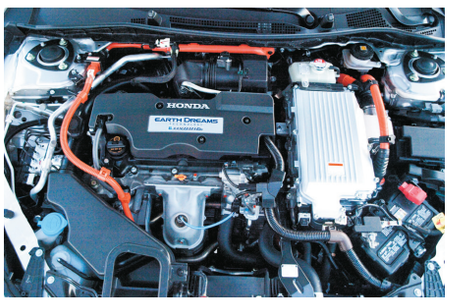
The base model Hybrid tester was priced at $29,945. For the sake of comparison, the similarly equipped EX four-cylinder model with the CVT comes in with a sticker price of $26,470.

That brings up a question: Is the Hybrid worth the extra $3,475? If you live in a perfect climate, drive on the light side, and are truly committed to living a green lifestyle – then the answer is "yes." It is a Honda Accord with a new hybrid system that actually works while retaining the normality of an Accord. You might simply go for the standard EX with the regular four-cylinder. You will lose more than a few MPGs in the process, however.

It is a huge debate – to hybrid or not. If you choose a hybrid – even in the most competitive segment for gas-electric combos – rest assured, Honda got this one right. ■









BIGGAYNEWS FROM FLORIDA:

Six South Florida Gay Couples Sue In Miami-Dade Circuit Court For Right To Marry

The *Miami Herald* reports that six same-sex couples on Tuesday sued in Miami-Dade Circuit Court for the right to marry in Florida, once again thrusting the Sunshine State into the national gay rights spotlight. The six couples, along with their attorneys, say that Florida's refusal to grant same-sex couples the right to marry excludes them from the "fundamental rights, dignity, and equality guaranteed to all persons by the United States Constitution." John Stemberger, president and general counsel of the Florida Family Policy Council derides the lawsuit as being "nothing more than a publicity stunt."

BIGGAYNEWS FROM VIRGINIA:

New Virginia Attorney General Drops Defense of Gay Marriage Ban

The New York Times reports that state attorney general Mark Herring asked a federal court to invalidate the state's ban on same-sex marriage, calling the law unconstitutional and oppressive. Herring asserted that Virginia had too often been on the "wrong side" of justice on civil rights matters. The decision to drop support for the gay marriage ban was an abrupt shift from the positions taken in the past by the state's socially conservative elected officials. Virginia is now on a path to be the first Southern state to allow marriage equality.

BIGGAYNEWS FROM CALIFORNIA:

Court Says Prospective Jurors Can't Be Removed Because They Are Gay

The *Los Angeles Times* reports that a federal appeals court decided Tuesday that lawyers may not exclude a potential juror solely because he or she is gay, extending a protection once reserved in federal courts for race and gender to sexual orientation. The decision was a unanimous one, with all three judges on the panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals overturning a verdict in a case concerning an AIDS medication because a potential juror was struck due to being gay. One of the judges, Stephen Reinhardt, commented: "Strikes exercised on the basis of sexual orientation continue this deplorable tradition of treating gays and lesbians as undeserving of participation in our nation's most cherished rites and rituals."

BIGGAYNEWS FROM TEXAS:

Houston Mayor Fires Back at Critics Over Her Marriage: 'Get over it!'

LGBTQ Nation reports that Houston mayor Aniece Parker responded to Republicans who say her recent marriage to her longtime partner was politically motivated. Parker married her partner of 23 years Kathy Hubbard in Palm Springs, Calif. Within hours, some Republican leaders in Texas blasted Parker by questioning her motives behind their marriage. Parker said: "You do not commit 23 years of your life to someone to make a political statement. I took four days off. I had to leave my home state and make a little wedge of time to marry the woman I love. They can get over it."

BIGGAYNEWS FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.:

Obama Picks Staci Michelle Yandle, Black Lesbian Judge, For Federal Judgeship

The *Huffington Post* reports that President Barack Obama prides himself on the diversity of his judicial picks, but on Thursday, he charted new territory by nominating Staci Michelle Yandle, who, if confirmed, would become the second-ever out black lesbian federal judge. Yandle has been in private practice in an Illinois law firm for twenty years, and would be taking the seat for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Illinois. In an earlier interview, Yandle was quoted as saying "When I first started practicing, for a while I did not feel comfortable acknowledging my sexual orientation because I didn't want it to cost me my job. I wanted to be judged on my merit and my merit alone."

BIGGAYNEWS FROM UGANDA:

Uganda To Deport British Man Charged In Gay Sex

ABC News reports that a Ugandan court on Wednesday ordered the deportation of a British man facing criminal charges related to images of him having sex with another man. Bernard Randall, 65, was charged after images from his stolen laptop were leaked to a Ugandan newspaper. Homosexuality is a criminal act in the African nation, with a relatively new law calling for life in prison for committing "aggravated homosexual acts." Randall's lawyer said that his client's deportation stems from him having an expired visa since courts failed to find evidence against him in the original criminal case.

BIGGAYNEWS FROM GERMANY:

Germany's Olympic Uniform Seen as Pro-Gay

Der Spiegel reports that Germany's new outfits for the upcoming Winter Olympics in Sochi have been interpreted by many as a silent protest against Russia's anti-gay laws, but the German Olympic Sports Confederation disputes it. Germany premiered the bold and colorful uniforms for its Olympics team with a runway show in Düsseldorf. On Twitter, a German user described the rainbow pattern as a "clear political statement which looks great, like a gay and lesbian pride parade." The German Olympic Sports Confederation disputes any political message saying that the designs had been finalized before the Russia protests had even begun.

BIGGAYNEWS FROM KENYA:

Kenyan Author Lashes Out At Anti-Gay Laws: "I'm Gay"

ABC News reports that African literary light Binyavanga Wainaina says he's known he was gay since he was 5, though he did not have a homosexual encounter until he was 39.
The 43-year-old has decided to come out in an online essay, something that takes extraordinary courage considering that homosexuality and gay sex are illegal in most African countries and could result in jail time, fines or harassment.
In an interview, Wainaina said that he wanted to make his sexuality known to preserve his dignity, and to shed light on the plight of the GLBT community and how they are treated in so many African nations. ■

SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

Imposter

In 1968–almost 100 years ago—I watched the first television series to positively portray an African-American woman. The show, *Julia*, starred Diahann Carroll; the storyline was about a widowed black woman trying to raise her son while working as a medical office nurse. This was a really big deal; beamed into homes across the nation were images of an articulate black woman who was likeable and smart.

For much of the country, those images challenged prevailing stereotypes about black women and their families.

I remember a lot of commentary about how *Julia* was historic and a sign of America's racial progress. Finally, we were seeing black people for who they really were: humans simply trying to lead happy lives.

Just like us white people.

Two months ago, I saw what I thought was another television show making history. An episode of CBS's *Two and A Half Men* featured "Paula" (played by Paula Marshall), a supposed post-operative transgender woman whom Alan (played by Jon Cryer) was dating. I didn't know Paula Marshall the actor and readily assumed she was truly a male to female trans person.

My subsequent survey of online reviews revealed much praise for the episode because of its "respectful" treatment of transgender people. Apparently, this was deemed a bit historic for a comedy—that trans folk were finally being portrayed as just any other human and not some aberration to make fun of.

In the "Paula" episode I saw, Paula and Alan sat viewing a football game on television. To drive home that Paula had previously been a male sports fanatic, she used some exaggerated masculine mannerisms—a fist punch to celebrate a great play and an adjustment to her crotch, as if old habits are hard to break—all of which tipped me off that something just wasn't right. Actor or not, Paula didn't look as if she'd ever been a dude in a former real life.

Until then, with Paula's beautiful face and body and magnificent feminine voice, I had thought, *Wow, this Paula chick is really passable.*

So passable that I was quite frickin jealous.

Halfway through the *Two and A Half Men* episode, I Googled "Paula Marshall" and found that "she" had never, ever been a "he" in real life. Paula Marshall was a genetic female playing a transwoman.

In other words, Paula the television character was an imposter.

My reaction?

Oh, that sucks!

I know; the response wasn't very feminine. I'm sure it was due to the scant trace of male left in my psyche—something Paula Marshall couldn't hope to pull off.

At least in *Julia*, Diahann Carroll was actually black. I wondered, had the producers of *Two and A Half Men* been around in 1968, would they have settled for a white Julia in blackface?

Nothing personal to Paula Marshall, but CBS made her a blackface transwoman.

This wasn't the first time I'd seen an imposter transwoman. Felicity Huffman (of *Desperate Housewives* fame) played a transwoman in *Transamerica*. But that was in 2005 which, given how things are positively changing for trans people, seems like six decades ago.

It's not as if there aren't any transwomen actors out there, either. Candis Cayne had recurring roles in *Nip/Tuck*. Laverne Cox is a regular on *Orange is the New Black.* There are other transwomen trying to break into television and film.

Why not give those authentic transwomen a chance? Why not let mainstream America see a straight man talk with a real live transwoman in bed together?

Maybe the answer is that trans people still scare some non-trans people. Perhaps it's more difficult to joke with a real transwoman about formerly having a penis (one of the laugh lines in *Two and A Half Men*). It could be that some straight people— like television producers, writers, and directors–still aren't taking the time to get to know us. Or to take us seriously.

Whatever CBS's reason for casting a genetic female as a transwoman, I'm appalled by its imposter-is-real mentality. I've spent all my life getting to the point of accepting myself and living authentically. Almost every other out trans person I know has done similar hard work.

In other words, we're real humans.

The least that CBS and *Two and A Half Men* could do is acknowledge that. Doing so would be *real* respect. ■

Ellie Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir about Love, Honesty and Gender Change. *She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com*

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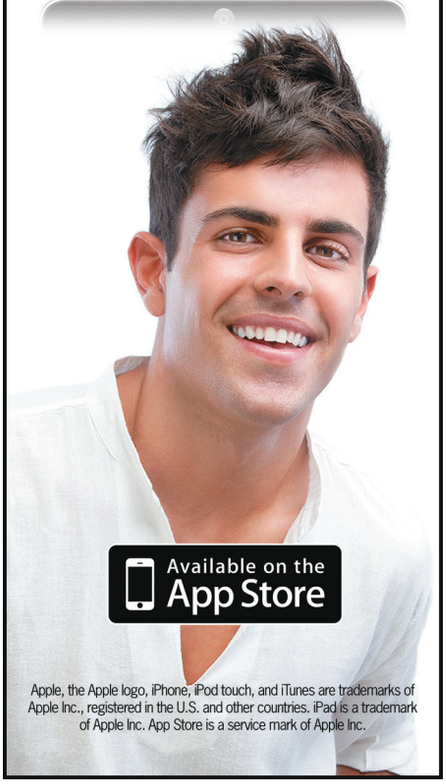
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DATELAND | BY JENNIFER PARELLO

Rebel Forces

This evening, I called my friend, Delores, who lives a few blocks away to tell her that I found her gravy ladle.

"Well, I'd drive over to pick it up but I hate to go into that crime ridden neighborhood after dark!" she cackled. "You heard about what happened to your neighbor Karen yesterday, didn't you? She was arrested!"

I gasped. But not nearly as loud as I should have, because learning that one of my neighbors has been hauled off to jail is a fairly regular occurrence in this small resort town. Just last week the commodore of the Yacht Club and his wife were dragged out of the club in handcuffs after causing a drunken fracas. Instead of being shamed, the commodore was lauded for this feat. After all, in a club where alcoholism is a requirement of membership, it took a heroic level of drinking to be expelled from the club. "Imagine what his liver must look like!" we marveled as he was removed in shackles.

Even Delores, the very woman reporting the news flash on my neighbor, had been arrested briefly for operating a whorehouse in her rental property across from my home. She was released when it became clear that she only rented the house to the whores and didn't actually operate it. "All I knew is that they paid the rent on time," she said in her own defense. Nonetheless, I insist on referring to her as 'Madam.'

Ever since I moved to this town, I've met more felons than I ever did in all my years living in one of the dodgier neighborhoods of Chicago. The crimes are rarely bloody. Rather, they are rooted in small acts of defiance against authority. Since we live on a Great Lake, there's often maritime law involved. It's kind of like living in a Dickens' novel. I half expect Charles Laughton to appear in powdered wig and sentence perpetrators to "the lash."

"What did Karen do now?" I asked. A few months ago, Karen returned from spending 30 days in the hoosegow after mouthing off to the building inspector, a draconian figure known for recommending capital punishment for the crime of building a nonconforming porch.

"I don't have details yet, but I do know that it took place at the Post Office!" Delores exclaimed.

"I didn't know post offices still existed," I marveled. I looked out my window and spotted Karen on her front porch, deliberately and defiantly leafing through a stack of mail. In my past big-city life, my first impulse would have been to avoid her until the drama subsided. But instead I waved cheerfully and, in response, she lifted her hand to her mouth, a merry pantomime that signaled me to stop over for a cocktail later.

I worried when I moved to this conservative burg that I'd be ostracized because of my sexuality. But after withstanding an initial blast of titillation, I was welcomed as just another outlaw. And this is why I choose to live in a small town rather than a big city.

When I was younger, it felt daring to live amongst the masses in an urban jungle. But, actually, it's one of the safer ways to live. You can hide in plain site because no one is interested in peeking under your veil. However, in a small town, your life is completely transparent. Moments after a lightning bolt strikes your little life, the current runs through the psyche of the entire populace. Sure we gossip and judge, but then we pass the hat for bail and show up at your house with cookies and alcohol to welcome you when you return home in glorious rebellion. ■

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Between Reality & Fantasy: Through The Eyes Of Luke W.

As told to the author by Luke W.

Staring at me and at the rest of the world, emblazoned in huge golden letters above a revolving glass entrance: HILTON CHICAGO. I'm excited, nervous, terrified and, as my friends and I drive into the bellhop portico, I feel exposed. Standing on the curb are a dozen men wearing leather chaps and harnesses fashioned with metal rivets and intricate stitching. Beside them wait well-dressed hotel staff. I put my car in park and everything is suddenly all too real. The staff knows why I'm here. I'm here because I'm kinky. I'm here because the Hilton is the host hotel for the International Mr. Leather festival (IML). This is my first time attending. Until now I've pursued my fantasies behind a computer screen.

I'm 22 years old. It's May 2008.

A bellhop opens my car door. My heart is racing. I can't help but look at the group of men in leather. I know why they're here. They know why I'm here. There's no more hiding.

"Welcome to the Hilton Chicago," the bellhop says.

"Hi," I say, bashful and ashamed. He's judging me, I know it. He knows that I'm gay and that I'm probably going to have sex while I'm staying here. He knows that I'm aroused by what to him must be weird and bizarre. I want to get my room key and disappear.

I knew when I was a boy that I was different. I watched sports obsessively with my father not for stats, brackets, or competition, but for players' uniforms. Jerseys, pads, helmets—they all drove me crazy. At night, I binged on gay porn and online forums on the family computer. I chatted with guys who shared my fantasies about sports gear. And I was ashamed of every minute. That wasn't supposed to be me. I was the perfect student, involved in athletics, drama, and student government. Words like "kink" and "fetish" were used in reference to weirdos.

Now I'm 22 and I'm at IML. This will be my first time with people who share my kink. I have no idea what to expect. I've heard only that IML will change my life.

As I watch the bellhop put my luggage onto his cart, I see that he has a smirk on his face. He doesn't give an inclination that he's annoyed by us, and his politeness is unwavering. He's almost excited, it seems. He passes us off to the front desk and the woman checking us in seems equally happy to see us.

Are they mocking us? It doesn't feel that way. It doesn't feel like they're judging us at all. The way the staff acts around us—it's like they want us here. And they do. I'm later told that the hotel staff actually fight to work the IML weekend. To them it's exciting, fun, refreshing—exposure to a Candy Land underground.

I look around the Hilton lobby. It's beautifully built—marble from end to end—and full of men laughing, chatting, drinking, toasting. No one is singling me out, no one is staring at me like I'm strange. They're like me.

I've lived life to this point hiding from the "real" world. I spent adolescence afraid to sleep because sleeping involved the pain of waking up to face reality. My family didn't know I was gay, I knew they wouldn't accept it, and they certainly didn't know about my kink. Facing reality meant telling endless lies to avoid talk of "girlfriends." It meant tirelessly plunging myself into extracurricular activities in an effort to deflect attention from my sexuality. Adolescence was one crude deceit after another, so full of white lies that it became almost impossible to navigate. My secrets consumed me. I knew nothing of happiness.

And now I'm in the lobby of the Hilton Chicago, for the first time present before both worlds: on one side of me, the men I've fantasized about for the better part of my life; on the other side, an army of "normals" working the hotel—those who I'd always been afraid would judge me. But the duality is unlike what I faced in childhood. This time, both sides are aware of one another and they are not at odds. They're tolerant. No. They're more than tolerant. They're *welcoming*. For the first time I'm standing at the intersection fantasy and reality with no fear. No lies. Only me.

I was told that IML would change my life. It did. ■

Mr. Twin Cities Leather, the metro's feeder to IML, is held February 14-16, 2014. For more information, stop in at Twin Cities Leather & Latte at 2717 Hennepin Ave. or visit their Facebook page.

Luke W. lives in Minneapolis.

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